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Latimer.

SELECT

SERMONS AND LETTERS,

OF

DR. HUGH LATIMER,

BISHOP OF WORCESTER AND MARTYR, 1555.

FIRST AMERICAN EDITION.

PHILADELPHIA:
PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION,
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ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE AMERICAN EDITION.

The valuable work here presented to the Christian public is a reprint of the London edition, and comprehends the most valuable writings of the English Reformers. Their excellence has been generally appreciated, and their republication in the United States, where they are rarely to be met with, must be regarded as an auspicious event, as it may serve to diffuse and perpetuate those principles, in support of which the blood of the martyrs was shed, and for which the American Church is again called to contend. In presenting an exact reprint of the English edition, the Presbyterian Board of Publication do not wish to be considered as concurring in every form of expression or shade of sentiment to be found in these volumes. Their object is to present the Reformers as they appeared in their own writings, at a time when the church was just emerging

from papal darkness. Still they appreciate the sound argument, evangelical doctrine and fervent piety which generally characterize their religious writings and can commend them to the discriminating reader.

It affords the Board unfeigned pleasure to state, that they have been encouraged to engage in this enterprise, by the liberality of an esteemed friend who has engaged to assume the entire expense of stereotyping the work. The sum requisite to accomplish this was more than *Five Thousand Dollars.*

The whole work is comprised in *Twelve* volumes, although each volume is complete and distinct in itself.

As the reader may be anxious to know upon what principles the English edition was prepared, the following information on the subject is extracted from the Postscript to that edition.

"The following particulars will explain the manner in which this work has been carried through the press. The pieces contained therein are without abridgment, unless where expressly mentioned. There are a few omissions which are necessary in a publication intended to be generally circulated, and to be useful at the present day. In other editions, the obsolete spelling has been laid aside, the

same plan is pursued in the present publication; the involved construction of sentences, common in writers of that period, has also been removed. Those words which have become unintelligible or offensive, are exchanged for others, or are explained by notes when it is desirable that they should be retained. These variations, if they may be so called, were as necessary to render this work generally useful, as the adoption of modern orthography. The utmost care has been taken that the meaning of the author should be strictly preserved, and the various pieces have been collated with the best and earliest editions, or with manuscript copies. This has been done, that the meaning of the author might be given as nearly as possible, not from the first editions being the most correct, as they often abound with errors, for which the hurried or careless manner in which they were for the most part passed through the press, will readily account. The present reprints, it is believed, will be found to present the most correct text of these writers that has hitherto appeared. More than half of the pieces included in this collection, have not been reprinted since the sixteenth century, and a considerable portion is now printed for the first time."

The Volumes included under the title of

The British Reformers may be arranged in the following order:

Volume 1. Wickliff to Bilney.
2. Tindal, Frith, and Barnes.
3. Edward VI., Parr, Balnaves, &c.
4. Latimer.
5. Hooper.
6. Bradford.
7. Ridley and Philpot.
8. Cranmer, Rogers, Careless, &c.
9. Knox.
10. Becon.
11. Jewell.
12. Fox, Bale and Coverdale.

By order of the Executive Committee.

Wm. M. ENGLES, Editor.

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A

BRIEF ACCOUNT

OF

DR. HUGH LATIMER,

Bishop of Worcester, and Martyr, 1555.

Dr. Hugh Latimer was the son of a respectable farmer of Thurcaster in Leicestershire. He was born about the year 1480, and at an early age gave evidence of good abilities, so that his parents sent him to school, and afterwards to the University of Cambridge, where he was distinguished for his diligence in study.

When ordained, he endeavoured to discharge his duties with much zeal; as he afterwards expressed, "I remember how scrupulous I was in my time of blindness and ignorance;" and he once had the intention of becoming a friar, thinking that by living a monastic life he should escape damnation. Fox adds "In this blind zeal he was a very enemy to the professors of Christ s gospel, as his oration against Philip Melancthon and his other works plainly declared." He used publicly to contradict Stafford, the lecturer in divinity at Cambridge, a follower of the truth, and exhorted the students not to believe the doctrines of the gospel taught in his lectures. This zeal had obtained for Latimer the approbation of his superiors, and he was appointed the cross-bearer to the university; whose office it was to carry the cross in the popish processions so frequent in those days.

But the time for his conversion was at hand. Bilney heard Latimer's oration against Melancthon, and pitying his blindness, was anxious that this zealous but ignorant brother should be brought to the true knowledge of Christ. With this view Bilney went to Latimer's study, and entreated him to hear his confession. In this, the former took the opportunity to

make a particular declaration of his faith, and the scriptural grounds upon which it was founded; "at the hearing whereof," says Fox, "Latimer was, through the good Spirit of God, so touched, that he forsook his former studying of the school doctors, and other such fopperies, and became an earnest student of true divinity, so that, whereas before he was an enemy and almost a persecutor of Christ, he was now a zealous seeker after him."

Latimer thus became an earnest preacher of the faith which he once opposed, and instructed both the students and the common people in the truths of the gospel, as he could find opportunity. The Romish ecclesiastics now persecuted him and he was accused of heretical opinions before Cardinal Wolsey, who examined Latimer, but not finding him an ignorant character, as he had been represented to be, the cardinal gave him a general license to preach, instead of silencing him, as his adversaries had expected.

When King Henry VIII. began to throw off the shackles of the papacy, Latimer, as well as other favourers of the reformation, was called into notice. He resided in London for some time, and preached repeatedly with much acceptance. Whatever were Henry's faults, he never objected to honest plain dealing, and Latimer, never shrunk from reproving what he considered to be wrong. A valuable instance of this is preserved in Latimer's letter to the king, against a proclamation which forbad the use of the Scriptures and religious books in the English language, and which was afterwards recalled. About the year 1531 he was appointed to the living of West Kington, in the county of Wilts, to which place he immediately went, preferring the discharge of his pastoral duties to remaining at court. In this cure his diligence was so great and his preaching so successful, that the adversaries of the truth again sought to bring him into trouble. The accusations against him were founded upon his disregard of some popish superstitions, especially with respect to purgatory, and are noticed particularly in his letters to M. Morice and Sir E. Baynton. Being cited before the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London in 1532, articles were presented to Latimer, which he was required to subscribe; but, by the interference of the king, he was dismissed after a partial submission and apology for his opinions. He returned to the faithful dis-

charge of his parochial duties, and in the year 1535 was appointed to the bishopric of Worcester.

In this new charge Latimer acted with the same zeal and integrity as formerly, and promoted the reformation to the utmost of his ability. In particular, he laboured to remove the superstitious ceremonies which remained, or at least to point out Christ as the only object of adoration. Thus, in distributing the holy bread, the ministers were to say, "Of Christ's body this is a token—Which on the cross for our sins was broken;—Wherefore of your sins you must be forsakers—If of Christ's death ye will be partakers." A considerable part of the year he spent in visiting the different parts of his diocese preaching twice every Lord's day, and whenever opportunity occurred, on the week days. The evil designs of his adversaries were repeatedly baffled by his honesty and courage. One time in particular he was accused before the king for a sermon which he had preached at court, and his open testimony against the vices and evil deeds of the times was stigmatized as seditious. Henry sternly required Latimer to answer this accusation, and his noble reply to the king has been preserved. After calling upon his accuser to say how he ought to have preached, he turned to the king, and declaring his respect for his majesty, added, "I never thought myself worthy, nor did I ever sue, to be a preacher before your Grace, but I was called to it, and am willing, if you mislike me, to give place to my betters; for I grant there are a great many more worthy than I am: and if it be your Grace's pleasure so to allow them for preachers, I could be content to bear their books after them; but if your Grace allow me for a preacher, I would desire your Grace to give me leave to discharge my conscience, and give me leave to frame my doctrine according to my audience. I had been a very dolt to have preached so at the borders of your realm as I preach before your Grace." Let it be observed how Latimer made this difference in his preaching—not flattering men to their faces, and reproving them when absent, but honestly and faithfully bearing his testimony as a messenger from God unto them. In the same spirit, one New Year's day, when the courtiers were presenting costly articles to the king, according to the custom of those times, Latimer presented an English New Testament, folded down at the text, "Whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." This anecdote sufficiently

proves that Latimer was ill qualified to shine as a courtier. In fact, he studiously avoided meddling with public affairs, but was active in promoting the spiritual interests of the nation; and with that desire he preached the sermon at the commencement of the convocation of 1536. One beneficial result from the debates of that assembly, was the authorized publication of the Bible in the English language.

In the year 1539, Gardiner and other popish ecclesiastics gained considerable influence over the king's mind, and the act of Six Articles was passed, which restored some of the leading points of popery. Upon this Latimer resigned his bishopric, and with much cheerfulness returned to private life; he was, however, committed to the Tower at the instigation of bishop Gardiner, and although the king did not allow his enemies to proceed against him to the full extent which they desired, he was kept a prisoner during the remaining six years of that reign.

On the accession of Edward VI. Latimer was set at liberty. He was pressed to resume his bishopric, but declined again undertaking that charge, on account of his age and infirmities which, however, did not prevent him from diligently pursuing his studies, for which purpose he used to rise at two o'clock in the morning. He also constantly preached the gospel, both at court and in various parts of the country. His chief residence during this period was with Cranmer at Lambeth, where many came to him for advice under sufferings and wrongs of a temporal nature, as well as for spiritual advice. A striking instance of the latter we have in the case of John Bradford, who, in his letters to Father Traves, repeatedly mentions having resorted to Latimer for counsel; and the extent to which his assistance was sought, as to the former, is described by himself in one of his sermons before the king and the court. "I cannot go to my book," says he, "for poor folks who come to me, desiring me that I will speak, that their matters may be heard." The deplorable state of the administration of justice in those times, is often severely animadverted upon in his sermons.

Fox thus describes the labours of Latimer during this reign: "As the diligence of this man of God never ceased, all the time of King Edward, to profit the church, both publicly and privately; so among other doings in him to be noted, this is not lightly to be overpassed, but worthy to be observed, that God

not only gave unto him his Spirit, plenteously and comfortably to preach his word unto his church, but also by the same Spirit he did evidently foreshow and prophesy of all those kinds of plagues which afterwards ensued. And as touching himself, he ever affirmed that the preaching of the gospel would cost him his life; to which he cheerfully prepared himself, and felt certainly persuaded that Winchester (bishop Gardiner) was kept in the Tower for that purpose, as the event too truly proved."

When Queen Mary succeeded to the throne, Latimer was in the neighborhood of Coventry, and the council sent a citation for him to appear before them. The purpose of this summons was evident, and John Careless, a protestant weaver of that city, who afterwards died in prison for the truth, hastened to give Latimer information of the officer's approach. The venerable martyr thus had six hours' notice, during which he might have escaped, and even afterwards he had still further opportunities, for the officer only left the summons, and did not take his person. It is probable that the counsellors of the queen rather wished to drive the aged Latimer from the realm, than to exhibit him to the people as suffering for the truth. As Fox observes, "They well knew his constancy would deface their popery, and confirm the godly in the truth."

But Latimer felt that after the public and decided testimony he had given to the truths of the gospel, it was his duty not to shrink from suffering for them; and his age and infirmities gave him no opportunity of serving his Lord and Master in any other way so likely to be profitable to the souls of others. He was fully aware of the fate prepared for him; and as he passed through Smithfield, on his arrival in London, he said, "that place had long groaned for him," expecting to be committed to the flames where so many had been burned in previous years. With the same constancy and cheerfulness of spirit, when again imprisoned in the Tower, and the winter came on, he told the Lieutenant, that "unless they allowed him fire, he should deceive them; for they purposed to burn him, but he should be starved with cold."

As the number of prisoners increased, Cranmer, Ridley, and Bradford were confined in the same apartment with Latimer. The benefit derived from their conferences he mentioned in his protestation presented to the popish delegates at Oxford, which

will be found in a subsequent part of this volume. In April, 1554, the three bishops were removed to Oxford, where they were appointed to dispute in public respecting the sacrament. A full account of what passed was drawn up by bishop Ridley, and is inserted by Fox in the Acts and Monuments. When the Romanists pressed their scholastic distinctions and arguments from the Fathers upon Latimer, he at once told them that such allegations had no effect upon him, that the Fathers often were deceived, and he saw no reason to depend upon them, excepting when they depended upon scripture. After these disputations, Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer were condemned, and kept in prison for many months, during which time they occupied themselves in conferences on religious subjects, in fervent prayer, or in writing for the instruction and support of their brethren. Fox states, "M. Latimer, by reason of the feebleness of his age, wrote least of them all in this latter time of his imprisonment; yet in prayer he was fervently occupied, wherein oftentimes he continued so long kneeling, that he was not able to rise without help." The principal subjects of his prayers are related by Fox, and were as follows:

First, That as God had appointed him to be a preacher of his word, so also he would give him grace to stand to his doctrine until his death, that he might give his heart's blood for the same. *Secondly*, That God of his mercy would restore his gospel to England again, and these words, "once again, once again," he did so repeat as though he had seen God before him, and spoke to him face to face. *The third* matter was to pray for the preservation of the Queen's majesty, that now is, (Queen Elizabeth,) whom in his prayers he was wont to name, and entreated that she might be made a comfort to the then comfortless realm of England." These were prayers of faith, and, as such, were not offered in vain.

On the 30th of September, 1555, Ridley and Latimer were brought before the commissioners appointed by the pope to examine and condemn them. Latimer's appearance is thus described: "He held his hat in his hand, having a kerchief on his head, and upon it a night cap or two, and a great cap, such as townsmen use, with two broad flaps to button under the chin, wearing an old threadbare Bristol frieze gown, girded to his body with a penny leathern girdle, at which his testament hung by a string of leather, and his spectacles without case depend-

ing about his neck upon his breast." The popish ecclesiastics exhorted him to recant, which he refused, and met their arguments by reference to the word of God. They accused him of want of learning, on which he emphatically replied, "Lo, you look for learning at my hands, who have gone so long to the school of oblivion, making the bare walls my library, keeping me so long in prison without book, or pen and ink, and now you let me loose to come and answer to articles! You deal with me as though two were appointed to fight for life and death; and over-night the one, through friends and favour, is cherished, and hath good counsel given him how to encounter with his enemy; the other, for envy or lack of friends, all the whole night is set in the stocks. In the morning, when they shall meet, the one is in strength and lusty, the other is stark* of his limbs, and almost dead for feebleness. Think you that to run this man through with a spear is a goodly victory?"

This is but too correct a representation of the manner in which these examinations were conducted, and it is unnecessary to enter into further details respecting them. We now proceed to the account of Latimer's last sufferings, as recorded by Fox.

On the morning of October 16th, 1555, Latimer and Ridley were led to the place prepared for their burning, in the front of Baliol College at Oxford. They kneeled down, and prayed separately, and afterwards conversed together. A sermon was then preached, in which their doctrines and their characters were aspersed, but they were not suffered to reply. "Well," said Latimer, "there is nothing hid but it shall be opened." The jailer then took off their upper clothes, to prepare them for the stake, when it was seen that Latimer had put on a shroud as his under-garment; and although he had appeared a withered old man, his body crazed and bent under the weight of years, he now "stood upright, as comely a father as one might any where behold."

All being prepared, a lighted fagot was brought and laid at Ridley's feet. Latimer then turned, and addressed his fellow-sufferer in these memorable and emphatic words: "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; WE SHALL THIS DAY LIGHT SUCH A CANDLE, BY GOD'S GRACE, IN ENGLAND, AS I TRUST SHALL NEVER BE PUT OUT." The fire burned fiercely;

* Stiff.

Ridley suffered much with great constancy, but Latimer was soon delivered. He exclaimed aloud, "O Father of heaven, receive my soul." Bending towards the flames, he seemed to embrace them, and bathe his hands therein, and speedily departed. When the fire was burned low, and the spectators crowded round the dying embers, they beheld his heart unconsumed, and a quantity of blood gushed from it, reminding them of his prayer already mentioned. He had indeed shed his heart's blood as a testimony to the truth of the doctrines he had preached.

This awful testimony to the truth was not fruitless. Julius Palmer, a Fellow of Magdalen College, was present; he had been a bigoted papist, but his mind was excited to examine into the doctrines held by those who suffered, that he might ascertain what enabled them to undergo such cruel torments unmoved. He was present at the examinations and the burning of Ridley and Latimer, and their Christian fortitude was made the means of dispelling his prejudices. He shortly after himself suffered for the truth, but had been enabled to count the cost, and before the hour of suffering arrived, he declared, "Indeed it is a hard matter for them to burn that have the mind and soul linked to the body, as a thief's foot is tied in a pair of fetters; but if a man be once able, through the help of God's Spirit, to separate and divide the soul from the body, for him it is no more difficulty to burn, than for me to eat this piece of bread." There also is reason to believe that the sufferings of Latimer and Ridley, and of other martyrs, were made useful to one at least of the Spanish ecclesiastics who were at that time in England.

The distinguishing characteristic of Latimer was sincerity, or faithful zeal for the truth;—in a follower of Christ these qualities are inseparable. They were especially displayed in his sermons, and the attention of his auditors was fixed by the lively and cheerful style in which he delivered the truths of the gospel, and reproved the evil practices of men. When preaching, he frequently introduced anecdotes and detailed statements, in a manner which would appear singular in a modern preacher; but this is to be accounted for by the customs of the times in which he lived, and his anxiety to avail himself of the opportunities for usefulness so peculiarly presented to him. Many of these illustrations seem harsh to modern ears, but they were well suited to make an impression upon minds almost wholly

unacquainted with the Scriptures; and this ignorance was so general in that day, that it sufficiently accounts for his minuteness in detailing the events of sacred history.

To the anecdotes and particulars of the customs and manners of those times, much of the popularity of Latimer's Sermons in later days, may probably be attributed; but the present selection has been made with the view of presenting to the reader his doctrinal sentiments, as a main pillar of the reformation, rather than to exhibit historical details of the times in which he lived, and it is chiefly composed of the sermons which were preserved by his faithful attendant and follower Augustine Bernher. The limits of the present work required selection; it has been made with a desire for the edification of the follower of gospel truth, though it contains much for the instruction and information of the general reader.

The preaching of Latimer has been thus described: "The method and course of his doctrine was, to set the law of Moses before the eyes of the people in all the severities and curses of it, thereby to put them the more in fear of sin, and to beat down their confidence in their own performances, and so to bring them to Christ, convincing them thereby of their need of him, and of flying to him by an evangelical faith. He could not bear that such as were hastening to heaven should be detained by the way by thieves and robbers, as he expressed it; that is, to be cast into the pope's prison of purgatory, to be tormented, and never allowed to depart thence unless money were paid to the robbers. He spoke against the opinion of obtaining pardon of sin, and salvation, by singing masses and wearing monks' cowls. He taught, on the contrary, that Christ alone was the author of salvation, and that he, by the one only oblation of his body, sanctified for ever all those that believe—that to him was given the key of David, and that he opened, and none could shut, and that he shut, and none could open. He preached how God loved the world, and so loved it, that he delivered his only Son to be slain, that all who from thenceforth believed in him should not perish, but have everlasting life; that he was a propitiation for our sins, and therefore upon him alone we must cast all our hopes, and that however men were laden with sins, they should never perish to whom he reckoned not sin, and that none of them should fail that believed in him." These were the spiritual and sound contents of Latimer's sermons, and this is the ac-

count of a learned man, Sir R. Morryson, who lived in those days, and asks, "Did there ever any man flourish, I say not in England only, but in any nation of the world, since the apostles, who preached the gospel more sincerely, purely, and honestly, than Hugh Latimer, bishop of Worcester?" (*See Strype.*)

The letters and smaller pieces of Latimer have not before been presented to the public in an accessible form: they will be found equally deserving of attention with his sermons; they exhibit the true character of this venerable saint. The whole of his writings show his conformity in principles and opinions with the other reformers, both British and foreign. They may have expressed various doctrines with different degrees of strength, but modern writers exercise ingenuity in vain when they attempt to show that in their sentiments they were opposed to each other.

Latimer preached with much force and eloquence, ample traces of which remain, although in writing they must appear much feebler than when spoken. It is evident that he spoke *from* the heart, and his words, we may conclude, by the divine blessing, in many instances went *to* the heart. Like Paul, he preached the faith which once he destroyed. Concerning zeal, he had persecuted the church, and touching the righteousness which was by the law, he was blameless; but the things which were gain to him he counted loss for Christ.

FRUITFUL SERMONS,

PREACHED BY THE

RIGHT REVEREND FATHER, AND CONSTANT MARTYR OF JESUS CHRIST,

HUGH LATIMER.

THE FIRST

OF

THE SERMONS OF THE CARD.*

Preached at Cambridge, in Advent, about the year 1529.

JOHN i.

And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent Priests and Levites from Jerusalem, to ask him, Who art thou?

TU quis es? Which words are as much as to say in English, "Who art thou?" These are the words of the Pharisees, who were sent by the Jews unto St. John Baptist in the wilderness, to know of him who he was; which words they spake unto him of an evil intent, thinking that

* These sermons "of the Card" are interesting as the earliest of those preached by Latimer which have been preserved. In reading them, we must remember that the Reformation had made but little progress at that time, and that it was then usual for preachers to seize upon some topic of the day to engage the attention of their hearers, who had not been accustomed to the close exhibition of the gospel, and to whom as yet a sermon wholly confined to scriptural doctrines would have proved strange and uninteresting. Speaking of these sermons, Fox says, "At Christmas, 1529, M. Latimer, alluding to the common custom of the season, gave the people certain cards out of the v. vi. vii. chapter of St. Matthew, whereupon they might not only then but always profitably employ their time. For the chief triumph (or trump) in the cards he fixed upon the heart, as the principal thing they should serve God with, whereby he quite overthrew all hypocritical and external ceremonies which do not tend to the necessary furtherance of God's holy word and sacraments. For the better attaining hereof, he wished the Scriptures to be in *English*, whereby the common people might the better learn their duties to God as well as to their neighbours. The handling of this matter was apt for the time and pleasantly applied by him, and also wrought in the hearers much fruit, to the overthrow of popish superstition and setting up of perfect religion."

Fox then gives these two sermons as being "the tenour and effect" of those which were thus preached by Latimer. They are evidently only the substance of what he delivered, and it is also probable that the persons who took them down were better able and more anxious to preserve the illustrations than the doctrine and application.

he would have taken on him to be Christ, and so they would have had him do of their good wills, because they knew that he was more carnal, and given to their laws, than Christ himself should be, as they perceived by their old prophecies: and also, because they marvelled much at his great doctrine, preaching, and baptizing, they were in doubt whether he was Christ or not: wherefore they said unto him, "Who art thou?" Then answered St. John, and confessed that he was not Christ.

Now here is to be noted, the great and prudent answer of St. John Baptist unto the Pharisees, that when they inquired of him who he was, he would not answer directly of himself, what he was himself, but he said he was not Christ. By which saying he thought to put the Jews and Pharisees out of their false opinion and belief towards him, in that they would have had him to exercise the office of Christ, and so he declared further unto them of Christ, saying, "There standeth one among you, whom ye know not; he it is who coming after me, is preferred before me, whose shoes' latchet I am not worthy to unloose." By this you may perceive that St. John spake much in the laud and praise of Christ his master, professing himself to be in no wise like unto him. So likewise it is necessary for all men and women of this world, not to ascribe unto themselves any goodness of themselves, but all unto our Lord God, as shall appear hereafter, when this question, "Who art thou?" shall be put unto them; not as the Pharisees did unto St. John, of an evil purpose, but of a good and simple mind, as may appear hereafter.

Now then, according to the preacher's mind, let every man and woman, of a good and simple mind, contrary to the Pharisees' intent, ask this question, "Who art thou?" This question must be moved to themselves, what they are of themselves, and on this fashion, "What art thou when thou comest into this world? What substance, what virtue, what goodness art thou of by thyself?" Which question, if thou rehearse oftentimes unto thyself, thou shalt well perceive and understand, how thou shalt make answer unto it: which must be made on this wise; "I am of myself, and by myself, coming from my natural father and mother, the child of the wrath and indignation of God, and the true inheritor of hell, a lump of sin, and working nothing of myself, but all towards hell, except I have better help of another, than I have of myself."

Now we may see in what state we enter into this world, that we are of ourselves the true and just inheritors of hell, the children of the wrath and indignation of Christ, working all towards hell, whereby we deserve perpetual damnation, by the right judgment of God, and the true claim of ourselves: which unthrifty* state that we are born unto is come unto us for our own deserts, and may be proved by this example following.

Let it be supposed that it might please the king, to accept into his favour a mean man, of simple degree and birth, not born to any possession; whom the king favoureth, not because this person has of himself deserved any such favours, but because the king casts his favour unto him of his own mere motion and pleasure: and because the king will more fully declare his favour unto him, he gives unto this man a thousand pounds in lands, to him and to his heirs, on this condition, that he shall take upon him to be the chief captain and defender of his town of Calais, and be true and faithful to him in the custody of the same, against the Frenchmen especially, above all other enemies.†

This man takes on himself this charge, promising fidelity thereto. It chances in process of time, that by the singular acquaintance and frequent familiarity of this captain with the Frenchmen, the Frenchmen give unto the said captain of Calais a great sum of money, so that he will allow them to enter into the said town of Calais by force of arms, and so thereby obtain the same for the crown of France; and upon this agreement the Frenchmen do invade the said town of Calais, only by the negligence of this captain.

Now the king, hearing of this invasion, comes with a great force to defend this his said town, and by good policy of war overcomes the Frenchmen, and enters again into his town of Calais. Then being desirous to know how these enemies of his came thither, he makes strict search and inquiry, by whom this treason was conspired: by this search it is known and found that his own captain was the author and the beginner of the betraying of it. The king, seeing

* Unprofitable, evil.

† Calais was taken from the French by King Edward III. in 1346, and continued in possession of the English till 1558. It was highly valued as the key of France, and was kept with much care. The loss of it deeply affected queen Mary, and was one cause of her death.

the great infidelity of this person, discharges this man from his office, and takes from him and his heirs the thousand pounds possessions. Think you not that the king doth justly unto him, and all his posterity and heirs? Yes, truly: the captain cannot deny but that he had true justice, considering how unfaithfully he behaved himself to his prince, contrary to his own fidelity and promise. So likewise it was of our first father Adam. He had given unto him the spirit and science of knowledge, to work all goodness therewith: this said spirit was not given only unto him, but unto all his heirs and posterity. He had also delivered him the town of Calais, that is to say, paradise in earth, the strongest and fairest town in the world, to be in his custody: he nevertheless by the instigation of these Frenchmen, that is to say, the temptations of the fiend, obeyed their desire and so he brake his promise and fidelity, the commandment of the everlasting King his Master, in eating of the fruit by him forbidden.

Now then, the king seeing this great treason in his captain, deposed him, and all his heirs and posterity, from the thousand pounds of possessions, that is to say, of everlasting life and glory; for as he had the spirit of science and knowledge, for himself and his heirs, so when he lost the same, his heirs lost it also by him, and in him. So now, this example proves, that by our father Adam we had once in him the true inheritance of everlasting joy; and by him and in him, again we lost the same.

The heirs of the captain of Calais could not by any manner of claim ask of the king the right and title of their father, in the thousand pounds possessions; for the king might answer, and say unto them, that although their father deserved not of himself to enjoy so great possessions, yet he deserved by himself to lose them, and greater, committing such high treason as he did, against his prince's commandments; whereby he had no wrong in losing his title, but was unworthy to have the same, and had therein true justice; let not you, that are his heirs, think that if he had justice to lose his possessions, you have wrong to lose the same. In the same manner it may be answered unto all men and women now in being, that if our father Adam were justly excluded from his possession of glory in paradise, let us, that are his heirs, think that we have no wrong in also losing the same; yea, we have true justice and right. Then in what a miserable state are we, who by our

own deserts have rightly and justly lost the everlasting joy, and of ourselves are become true inheritors of hell. For he that committeth deadly sin willingly, binds himself to be an inheritor of everlasting pain: and so did our forefather Adam willingly eat of the forbidden fruit. Wherefore he was cast out of the everlasting joy of paradise into this corrupt world amongst all vileness; whereby of himself he was not worthy to do any thing laudable and pleasant to God, but evermore bound to corrupt affections and beastly appetites, transformed into the most unclean and variable nature that was made under heaven; of whose seed and disposition all the world is lineally descended, insomuch that this evil nature is so diffused and shed from one to another, that at this day there is no man or woman living that can, of themselves, wash away their abominable vileness; and so we must needs grant ourselves to be in the same displeasure of God, as our father Adam was. By reason hereof, as I said, we are of ourselves children of the indignation and vengeance of God, the true inheritors of hell, and working all towards hell; which is the answer to this question, made to every man and woman by themselves, "Who art thou?"

And now, the world standing in this damnable state, the incarnation of Christ cometh in. The Father in heaven perceiving the frail nature of man, that he by himself and of himself could do nothing for himself, by his prudent wisdom sent down the second person in the Trinity, his Son Jesus Christ, to declare unto man his pleasure and commandment. And so at the Father's will Christ took on himself human nature, being willing to deliver man out of this miserable way, and was content to suffer cruel passion* in shedding his blood for all mankind, and so left behind, for our safeguard, laws and ordinances, to keep us always in the right path unto everlasting life, as the gospels, the sacraments, the commandments, and so forth; which if we keep and observe according to our profession, we shall answer better to this question, "Who art thou?" than we did before. . . . .

The answer of this question, when I ask it of myself, is, "I must say that I am a Christian man, a Christian woman, a child of everlasting joy, through the merits of the bitter passion of Christ." This is a joyful answer. Here

* Sufferings.

we may see how much we are bound, and indebted unto God, who has revived us from death to life, and saved us that were damned: which great benefit we cannot well consider, unless we remember what we were of ourselves before we meddled with him or his laws: and the more we know our feeble nature, and set less by it, the more we shall conceive and know in our hearts what God has done for us: and the more we know what God has done for us, the less we shall set by ourselves, and the more we shall love and please God; so that in no condition shall we either know ourselves or God, except we utterly confess ourselves to be mere vileness and corruption. Well, now it is come to this point, that we are Christian men, and Christian women; I pray you what does Christ require of a Christian man, or of a Christian woman? Christ requires nothing of a Christian man or woman, but that he will observe his rule. For as he is a good Augustine friar that keeps well St. Augustine's rules, so he is a good Christian man that keeps well Christ's rule.

Now then, what is Christ's rule? Christ's rule consists in many things, as in the commandments, and the works of mercy and so forth. And because I cannot declare Christ's rule unto you at one time, as it ought to be done, I will apply myself according to your custom at this time of Christmas; I will, as I said, declare unto you Christ's rule, but that shall be in Christ's cards. And as you are wont to celebrate Christmas by playing at cards,* I intend with God's grace, to deal unto you Christ's cards, wherein you shall perceive Christ's rule. The game that we will play at shall be the triumph (or trump,) which, if it be well played at, he that deals shall win; the players shall likewise win, and the standers and lookers on shall do the same; insomuch that there is no man that is willing to play at this triumph with these cards, but they shall all be winners, and no losers.

Let, therefore, every Christian man and woman play at these cards, that they may have and obtain the triumph; you must mark also that the triumph must apply to fetch home unto him all the other cards, whatsoever suit they are of. Now then take this first card, which must appear and be showed unto you as follows. You have heard what was spoken to men of the old law, "Thou shalt not kill;"

* It was usual for the preachers in those days to explain their meaning by reference to the customs and manners most in practice.

whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of judgment, and whosoever shall say unto his neighbour "Raca," that is to say, brainless, or any other like word of rebuking, shall be in danger of a council, and whosoever shall say unto his neighbour, "Fool," shall be in danger of hell-fire. This card was made and spoken by Christ, as appears in the fifth chapter of St. Matthew.

Now it must be noted, that whosoever shall play with this card must first, before they play with it, know the strength and virtue of the same; wherefore you must well note and mark terms, how they are spoken, and to what purpose: let us, therefore, read it once or twice, that we may be the better acquainted with it.

Now behold and see, it is divided into four parts: the first part is one of the commandments that was given unto Moses in the old law before the coming of Christ, which commandment we of the new law are bound to observe and keep, and it is one of our commandments. The other three parts spoken by Christ are but expositions unto the first part of this commandment: for in effect all these four parts are but one commandment, that is to say, "Thou shalt not kill:" yet, nevertheless, the three last parts show unto you how many ways you may kill your neighbour contrary to this commandment: yet for all Christ's expositions in the three last parts, the terms are not open enough to you who now read and hear them spoken. No doubt the Jews understood well enough when he spoke unto them the three last sentences: wherefore seeing that these terms were natural terms of the Jews, it shall be necessary to expound them, and compare them unto some like terms of our natural speech, that we, in like manner, may understand Christ as well as the Jews did. We will begin with the first part of this card, and then afterwards with the other three parts. You must therefore understand that the Jews and the Pharisees of the old law, to whom this first part, this commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," was spoken, thought it sufficient and enough for their discharge not to kill with any manner of material weapon, as sword, dagger, or with any such weapon; and they thought it no great fault whatsoever they said or did to their neighbour so that they did not harm or meddle with their bodies; which was a false opinion in them, as the three last sentences following the first prove well.

Now as to the three other sentences, you must note or

take heed what difference there is between these three manner of offences:—to be angry with your neighbour:—to call your neighbour brainless, or any such word of disdain:—or to call your neighbour fool. Whether these three manner of offences are of themselves one more grievous than the other, is to be opened unto you. Truly, as they are of themselves divers offences, so they kill diversely, one more than the other. As you shall perceive, by the first of these three a man who conceives against his neighbour or brother, ire, or wrath in his mind, by some occasion given unto him, although he is angry in his mind against his neighbour, he will, peradventure, express his ire by no sign, either in word or deed: yet nevertheless, he offends against God, and breaks this commandment in killing his own soul, and is therefore in danger of judgment.

Now to the second part of these three. The man that is moved with ire against his neighbour, and in his ire calls his neighbour brainless, or some other word of displeasure, as a man might say in his fury, "I shall handle thee well enough," which words and countenance do more represent and declare ire to be in this man than in him that was but angry, and spake no manner of word, nor showed any countenance to declare his ire: wherefore as he that so declares his ire either by word or countenance, offends more against God, so he both kills his own soul, and does what he can to kill his neighbour's soul in moving him unto ire, wherein he is faulty himself, and so this man is in danger of a council.

Now to the third offence, and last of these three. The man that calls his neighbour fool more declares his angry mind toward him than he that calls his neighbour but brainless, or any such words moving ire: for to call a man "fool," shows more envy in a man, than "brainless" does. Wherefore he offends most because he most earnestly with such words expresses his ire, and so he is in danger of hell-fire: wherefore you may understand now these three parts of this card to point out three offences, and that one is more grievous to God than the other, and that one kills the soul of man more than the other.

Now, peradventure, there are some who will marvel that Christ did not declare his commandment by some greater faults of ire, than by these which seem but small faults, as to be angry and speak nothing of it—to declare

it, and to call a man brainless—and to call his neighbour fool; truly these are the smallest and the least faults that belong to ire, or to killing in ire. Therefore beware how you offend in any kind of ire—seeing that the smallest is damnable to offend in, see that you offend not in the greatest. For Christ thought, if he might bring you from the smallest faults, and give you warning to avoid the least, he reckoned you would not offend in the greatest and worst, as to call your neighbour thief, or more blasphemous names. . . . . .

Now you have heard that to these different offences of ire and killing, are appointed punishments according to their degrees: for look, as the offence is, so shall the pain be: if the offence is great, the punishment shall be accordingly; if it is less, there shall be less pain for it. I would not now that you should think because there are but three degrees of punishment spoken of, that there are no more in hell: no doubt Christ spoke of no more here than these three degrees of punishments, thinking they were sufficient enough for example, whereby we might understand that there are as divers and many pains as there are offences; and so by these three offences, and these three punishments, all other offences and punishments may be compared with each other: yet I would satisfy your minds further in these three terms of judgment, council, and hell-fire. As you might say, what was the cause that Christ declared the pains of hell by these terms, more than by any other terms? I told you before that he knew well to whom he spake them; these terms were natural, and known well among the Jews and the Pharisees. Wherefore Christ taught them with their own terms, to the intent they might understand his doctrine the better: and these terms may be likened unto three terms which are common and usual amongst us, that is to say, the sessions of inquirance or inquest; the sessions of deliverance, and the execution day. Sessions of inquirance is like unto judgment; for when session of inquiry is, then the judges cause twelve men to give verdict of the felon's crime, whereby he shall be judged to be indicted. Sessions of deliverance is much like a council; for at sessions of deliverance, the judges go by themselves to counsel, to determine sentence against the felon. Execution day is to be compared unto hell fire; for the *Jews* had amongst themselves a place of

execution, named hell-fire;* and surely when a man goes to his death, it is the greatest pain in this world: wherefore you may see that there are degrees in our terms, as there are in those terms. These evil-disposed affections and sensualities in us are always contrary to the rule of our salvation. What shall we now do or imagine to thrust down these Turks,† and to subdue them? It is great ignominy and shame for a Christian man to be bound and subject unto a Turk. Nay, it shall not be so, we will first cast a trump in their way, and play with them who shall have the better, let us play therefore on this fashion with this card. Whensoever these foul passions and Turks shall rise in our stomachs against our brother or neighbour, either for unkind words, injuries, or wrongs, which they have done unto us, contrary unto our mind, straightway let us call unto our remembrance, and speak this question unto ourselves, "Who art thou?" The answer is, "I am a Christian man." Then further we must say to ourselves, "What requires Christ of a Christian man?" Now turn up your trump, your heart, (hearts is trump, as I said before) and cast your trump, your heart, on this card, and upon this card you shall learn what Christ requires of a Christian man, not to be angry, nor moved to ire against his neighbour, in mind, countenance, or otherways, by word or deed. Then take up this card with your heart, and lay them together: that done, you have won the game of the Turk, whereby you have defaced and overcome by true and lawful play; but, alas, for pity, the Rhodes‡ are won and overcome by these false Turks, the strong castle faith is decayed, so that I fear it is almost impossible to win it again.

The great occasion of the loss of this Rhodes is by reason that Christian men daily kill their own nation, so that the very true number of Christians is decayed: which murder and killing one of another, is increased especially two ways, to the utter undoing of christendom, that is to say, by example and silence. By example as thus: when the father, the mother, the lord, the lady, the master, the

* Tophet, mentioned 2 Kings xxiii.; Isaiah xxx.; and repeatedly by Jeremiah.

† Evil affections and sensual inclinations.

‡ Rhodes, which, though strongly fortified, was captured by the Turks in 1522. At that period the Turks were invading Europe, and made considerable progress, especially in Hungary.

dame, are themselves overcome by these Turks, and are continual swearers, adulterers, disposers to malice, never in patience, and so forsooth in all other vices. Think you not when the father, the mother, the master, the dame, are disposed unto vice or impatience, but that their children and servants shall incline and be disposed to the same? No doubt, as the child takes his natural disposition of his father and mother, so shall the servants apply themselves unto the vices of their masters and dames; if the heads are false in their faculties and crafts, it is no marvel if the children, servants, and apprentices, joy therein. This is a great and shameful manner of killing Christian men, that the fathers, the mothers, the masters, and the dames, shall not only kill themselves, but all theirs, and all that belong to them, and so this way a great number of Christian lineage are murdered and spoiled. The second manner of killing is by silence. By silence a great number of Christian men are slain, which is in this manner—although the father and mother, master and dame, of themselves are well disposed to live according to the law of God, yet they may kill their children and servants by suffering them to do evil before their faces, and not using due correction according unto their offences. The master seeth his servant or apprentice take more of his neighbour than the king's laws, or the order of his faculty* admits, or he suffered him to take more of his neighbour than he himself would be content to pay if he were in like condition: thus doing, I say, such men kill wittingly their children and servants, and shall go to hell for so doing; and their fathers and mothers, masters and dames, shall bear them company for so suffering. Wherefore I exhort all true Christian men and women to give good example unto your children and servants, and not suffer them by silence to offend. Every man must be in his own house, according to St. Augustine's mind, a bishop, not only giving good example, but teaching according to it, rebuking and punishing vice, not suffering your children and servants to forget the laws of God. You ought to see them learn their belief, know the commandments of God, keep their holy days, and not lose their time in idleness; if they do so, you shall all suffer pain for it, if God is true in his saying, as there is no doubt thereof: and so you may perceive that there are many who break this card, "Thou shalt not kill," whereby they are no

* Trade, employment.

winners, but great losers; but who are they now-a-days that can clear themselves of these manifest murders used to their children and servants? I think that many have these two ways slain their own children unto their damnation, were not the great mercy of God ready to help them when they repent thereof.

Wherefore considering that we are so prone and ready to continue in sin, let us cast down ourselves with Mary Magdalen; and the more we bow down with her towards Christ's feet, the more we shall be afraid to rise again in sin, and the more we know and submit ourselves, the more we shall be forgiven, and the less we know and submit ourselves, the less we shall be forgiven, as appears by this example.

When Christ was in the world amongst the Jews and Pharisees, there was a great Pharisee, whose name was Simon. This Pharisee desired Christ on a time to dine with him, thinking in himself that he was able and worthy to give Christ a dinner. Christ refused not his dinner, but came unto him. In time of their dinner, there came into the house a common sinner, named Mary Magdalen. As soon as she perceived Christ, she cast herself down, and called unto her remembrance what she was of herself, and how greatly she had offended God, whereby she conceived in Christ great love, and so came near unto him, and washed his feet with her tears, and shed upon his head precious ointment, thinking that by him she should be delivered from her sins. This great and proud Pharisee, seeing that Christ accepted her oblation in good part, had great indignation against this woman, and said to himself, "If this man Christ were a holy prophet, as he is taken for, he would not suffer this sinner to come so nigh him." Christ, understanding the evil mind of this Pharisee, said to him: "Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee." "Say what thou pleasest," quoth the Pharisee. Then saith Christ, "I pray thee tell me this: If there be a man to whom is owing twenty pounds by one, and forty by another, and the man to whom this money is owing, perceives these two men are not able to pay him, and he forgives them both; which of these two debtors ought to love this man most?" The Pharisee said, "That man ought to love him best that hath most forgiven him." Christ said, "So it is with this woman. She hath loved me most, therefore most is forgiven her: she hath known

her sins most, whereby she hath most loved me; and thou hast least loved me, because thou hast least known thy sins, therefore because thou hast least known thine offences, thou art forgiven least." So this proud Pharisee had an answer to allay his pride; and think you not, but that there are amongst us a great number of these proud Pharisees, who think themselves worthy to invite Christ to dinner, who shall presume to sit by Christ in the church, and disdain this poor woman Magdalen, their poor neighbour, with a high, disdainful, and solemn countenance, and be always desirous to climb highest in the church, reckoning themselves more worthy to sit there than another? poor Magdalen under the board, and in the belfry, hath more forgiven of Christ than they have; for it is likely that these Pharisees less know themselves and their offences, whereby they love God less, and so they are forgiven less.

I would to God we would follow this example, and be like unto Magdalen. I doubt not but we all are Magdalens in falling into sin, and in offending: but we are not again Magdalens in knowing ourselves, and in rising from sin. If we are true Magdalens, we should be as willing to forsake our sin, and rise from sin, as we were willing to commit sin, and to continue in it, and we then should know ourselves best, and make more perfect answer than ever we did, unto this question, "Who art thou?" To the which we might answer, that we are true Christian men and women: and then I say you should understand and know how you ought to play at this card, "Thou shalt not kill;" without any interruption of your deadly enemies the Turks, and so triumph at the last, by winning everlasting life in glory. Amen.

THE SECOND

OF

THE SERMONS OF THE CARD.

JOHN i.

And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent Priests and Levites from Jerusalem, to ask him, Who art thou?

Now you have heard what is meant by the first card, and how you ought to play with it, I purpose again to deal unto you another card, almost of the same suit; for they are of such near affinity, that one cannot be well played without the other. The first declared, "that you should not kill;" which might be divers ways, as being angry with your neighbour, in mind, in countenance, in word, or deed. It declared also how you should subdue the passions of ire, and so clear yourselves from them: and where this card kills in you those stubborn Turks of ire; this second card wills not only that they should be mortified in you, but that you yourselves shall cause them to be mortified also in your neighbour, if your neighbour has been through you moved unto ire, either in countenance, word, or deed. Now let us hear the tenour of this card.

"Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

This card was spoken by Christ, as St. Matthew testifies in his fifth chapter, against all such as presume to come to the church to make oblation unto God, either by prayer, or any other deed of charity,* not having their neighbours reconciled to them. Reconciling is as much as to say, Restore thy neighbour unto charity, who by thy words or deeds is moved against thee: then if thou hast spoken to, or of thy neighbour, whereby he is moved to

* Love to God and man.

ire or wrath, thou must lay down thy oblation. Oblations are prayers, alms-deeds, or any work of charity; these are called oblations to God. Lay down therefore thine oblation: before thou begin to do any of these works, go unto thy neighbour, and confess thy fault unto him; declaring thy mind, that if thou hast offended him, thou art glad and willing to make him amends, as far as thy words and substance will extend, requiring him not to take it at the worst. Thou art sorry in thy mind, that thou shouldest be the occasion of his being offended. "What manner of card is this?" will some say. "Why? what have I to do with my neighbour's or brother's malice? Cain said, 'Have I the keeping of my brother, or shall I answer for him and for his faults?' This were no reason: as for myself, I thank God I owe no man malice nor displeasure, if others owe me any, at their own peril be it. Let every man answer for himself." Nay, sir, not so, as you may understand by this card; for it saith, If thy neighbour has anything, any malice against thee, through thine occasion, "Lay down," saith Christ, "thine oblation; pray not to me, do no good deeds for me; but go first unto thy neighbour, and bring him again unto my flock, who has forsaken the same through thy evil words, mocks, scorns, or disdainful countenance, and so forth; and then come and offer thine oblation, then do thy devotion, then do thy alms-deed, then pray, if thou wilt have me hear thee."—O good Lord, this is a hard reckoning, that I must go and seek him out that is offended with me, before I pray or do any good deed. I cannot go unto him. Peradventure he is a hundred miles from me, beyond the seas, or else I cannot tell where; if he were here nigh, I would with all my heart go unto him.—This is a lawful excuse before God, provided that thou wouldest in thine heart be glad to reconcile thy neighbour, if he were present, and that thou thinkest in thy heart, whensoever thou shalt meet with him, to go unto him, and require him charitably to forgive thee, and so never intend to come from him until you both depart one from the other true brethren in Christ. Yet peradventure there are some in the world that are so devilish and hard-hearted, that they will not apply in any condition* unto charity. For all that, do what lieth in thee by all charitable means to bring him to unity: if he will in no wise apply thereunto, thou mayest be sorrowful

* By any persuasion, or under any circumstances.

in thy heart, that by thine occasion that man or woman continues in such a damnable state: notwithstanding this, if thou do the best that lieth in thee to reconcile him, according to some doctors' minds, thou art discharged towards God. Nevertheless St. Augustine doubteth even in this case, whether thy oblations, prayers, or good deeds shall avail thee before God, or not, until thy neighbour come again to a good state, whom thou hast brought out of the way. Doth this noble doctor doubt therein, what aileth us to be so bold, or to count it but a small fault or none, to bring another man out of patience for every trifle that standeth not with our mind? You may see what a grievous thing it is to bring another man out of patience, whom peradventure you cannot bring in again with all the goods that you have: for surely, according to the opinion of great wise men, friendship once broken will never well be made whole again. Wherefore you shall hear what Christ saith unto such persons: "I came down into this world, and so took on me bitter sufferings for man's sake, by the merits whereof I intended to make unity and peace in mankind, to make man brother unto me, and so to expel the dominion of Satan, the devil which worketh nothing else but dissension: and yet now there are a great number of you who have professed my name, and say you are Christian men, who do rebel against my purpose and mind. I go about to make my fold; you go about to break the same, and kill my flock. How darest thou (saith Christ) presume to come unto my altar, unto my church, or unto my presence, to make oblation unto me, who takest on thee to spoil my lambs? I go about like a good shepherd to gather them together: and thou doest the contrary, ever more ready to divide and lose them. Who made thee so bold to meddle with my silly sheep, which I bought so dearly with my precious blood? I warn thee out of my sight, come not into my presence; I refuse thee and all thy works, except thou go and bring home again my lambs which thou hast lost; wherefore, if thou thyself intend to be one of mine, lay down thine oblation, and come no further towards mine altar, but go and seek them without any questions, as it becomes a true and faithful servant."

A true and faithful servant, whensoever his master commands him to do anything, makes no stops or questions, but goes forth with a good mind: and it is not unlikely but that he continuing in such a good mind and will, shall

well overcome all dangers and stops, whatever betides him in his journey, and shall effectually bring to pass his master's will and pleasure. On the contrary, a slothful servant, when his master commands him to do anything, he will ask questions, where, when, which way? and so forth: and he puts every thing in doubt, so that although both his errand and his way be ever so plain, yet by his untoward and slothful behaviour, his master's commandment is either quite undone, or else so done that it shall stand to no good purpose. Go now forth with the good servant, and ask no such questions and put no doubts; be not ashamed to do thy Master's and Lord's will and commandment. Go, as I said, unto thy neighbour that is offended by thee, and reconcile him whom thou hast lost by thy unkind words, by thy scorns, mocks, and other disdainful words and behaviour, and be not nice to ask him the cause why he is displeased with thee; require of him charitably to remit, and cease not till you both depart one from the other true brethren in Christ. Do not thy master's message with cautels* and doubts, like the slothful servant; come not to thy neighbour whom thou hast offended, and give him a pennyworth of ale, or a banquet, and so make him a fair countenance, thinking that by thy drink or dinner he will show thee like countenance. I grant that you both may laugh and make good cheer, and yet there may remain a bag of rusty malice, twenty years old, in thy neighbour's bosom; and when he departs from thee with a good countenance, thou thinkest all is well then. But now I tell thee it is worse than it was, for by such cloaked charity, where before thou didst offend Christ but once, thou hast offended twice herein: for now thou goest about to give Christ a mock, if he would take it of thee: thou thinkest to blind thy master Christ's commandment. Beware and do not so, for at length he will overmatch thee, and take thee wheresoever thou art, and so as I said, it should be better for thee not to do his message on this fashion, for it will stand thee in no purpose. "What?" some will say, "I am sure he loveth me well enough now. He speaketh fair to my face." Yet for all that thou mayest be deceived. To speak fair proves not true love in a man. If he loves thee with his mind and heart, he loves thee with his eyes, with his tongue, with his feet, with his hands and

* Selfish cautions.

his body; for all these parts of a man's body are obedient to his will and mind. He loves thee with his eyes, who looks cheerfully on thee, when thou meetest with him, and is glad to see thee prosper and do well. He loves thee with his tongue, who speaks well of thee behind thy back, or gives thee good counsel. He loves thee with his feet, who is willing to go and help thee out of trouble and business. He loves thee with his hands, who will help thee in time of necessity, by giving some alms, or with any other employment of the hand. He loves thee with his body, who will labour with his body, or put his body in danger to do good for thee, or to deliver thee from adversity, and so forth, with the other members of his body. And if thy neighbour will do according to these sayings, then thou mayest think that he loves thee well, and thou in like wise oughtest to declare and open thy love unto thy neighbour, or else you are bound one to reconcile the other, till this perfect love is engendered amongst you. It may be, you will say, I am content to do for my neighbour what I can, saving myself harmless. I promise thee Christ will not hear this excuse: for he himself suffered harm for our sakes, and for our salvation was put to extreme death. I wish if it had pleased him, that he might have saved us and never felt pain; but in suffering pains and death, he gave us an example, and teaches us how we should do one for another, as he did for us all. For, as he saith himself, he that will be mine, let him deny himself, and follow me in bearing my cross and suffering my pains. Wherefore we must needs suffer pain with Christ to do our neighbour good, as well with the body and all its members, as with heart and mind.

Now I trust you know what your card means, let us see how we can play with the same. Whensoever you go and make your oblation unto God, ask of yourselves this question, "Who art thou?" The answer as you know is, "I am a Christian man!" Then you must again ask of yourself, what Christ requires of a Christian man? By and by cast down your trump, your heart, and look first upon one card, then upon the other. The first tells thee thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not be angry, thou shalt not be out of patience. This done, thou shalt look if there are any more cards to take up, and if thou look well, thou shalt see another card of the same suit, wherein thou shalt

know that thou art bound to reconcile thy neighbour. Then cast thy trump unto them both, and gather them all three together, and do according to the virtue of thy cards, and surely thou shalt not lose. Thou shalt first kill the great Turks,* and discomfit and thrust them down. Thou shalt fetch home again Christ's sheep which thou hast lost, whereby thou mayest go both patiently, and with a quiet mind unto the church, and make thy oblation unto God, and then without doubt he will hear thee. But yet Christ will not accept our oblation, although we are in patience, and have reconciled our neighbour, if our oblation be made of another man's substance—it must be our own. See therefore that thou hast gotten thy goods according to the laws of God and of thy Prince. For if thou gettest thy goods by polling† and extortion, or by any other unlawful ways, then if thou offer a thousand pound of it, it will stand thee in no good, for it is not thine. In this point a great number of executors offend; for when they are made rich by other men's goods, then they take upon themselves to build churches, to give ornaments to God and his altar, to gild saints, and to do many good works therewith; but all in their own name, and for their own glory. Wherefore, saith Christ, "they have in this world their reward," and so their oblations are not their own, nor are they acceptable before God. Another way God will refuse thy voluntary oblation, as thus; If thou hast gotten ever so truly thy goods, according to both the laws of God and man, and hast with the same goods not relieved thy poor neighbour, when thou hast seen him hungry, thirsty, and naked, God will not take thy oblation when thou shalt offer the same, because he will say unto thee: "When I was hungry, thou gavest me no meat; when I was thirsty, thou gavest me no drink; and when I was naked, thou didst not clothe me: wherefore I will not take thy oblation, because it is none of thine. I left it to thee to relieve thy poor neighbours, and thou hast not done therein according unto this my commandment, I will have mercy, rather than sacrifice. Wherefore until thou dost the one as well as the other, I will not accept thine oblation." Evermore bestow the greatest part of thy goods in works of mercy, and the less part in voluntary works. Voluntary works are called all manner of offering in the church, except your offering days, and your tithes.

* Evil passions and sinful lusts. † Fraud, robbery.

Setting up candles,* gilding, and painting, building of churches, giving ornaments, going on pilgrimage, making highways, and such others, are called voluntary works, which works are of themselves good, and proper to be done. Necessary works, and works of mercy are called commandments; and works of mercy consist in relieving and visiting thy poor neighbours. Now then, if men are so foolish that they will bestow the most part of their goods in voluntary works, which they are not bound to keep, but willingly and by their devotion; and leave the necessary works undone, which they are bound to do, they and all their voluntary works are like to go unto everlasting damnation. And I promise you, if you build a hundred churches, give as much as you can make to the gilding of saints, and honouring of the church, and offer candles as great as oaks,* if thou leave the works of mercy and the commandments undone, these works shall not avail thee. No doubt the voluntary works are good, and ought to be done; but yet they must be so done, that by the occasion the necessary works and the works of mercy are not decayed and forgotten—if you will build a glorious church unto God, see first yourselves to be in charity with your neighbours, and suffer not them to be offended by your works. Then when you come into your parish church, you bring with you the temple of God; as St. Paul saith, "You yourselves are the very holy temples of God:" and Christ saith by his prophet, "In you will I rest, and intend to make my mansion and abiding place:" again, if you gild and paint Christ in your churches, and honour him in vestments,† see that the poor people die not for lack of meat, drink, and clothing. Then you deck the very true temple of God, and honour him with rich vestures, that will never be worn out. Do use yourselves according unto the commandments; and then finally set up your candles, and they will report what a glorious light remains in your hearts, for it is not fitting to see a dead man‡ light candles! Then, I say, go your pilgrimages, build your churches, do all your voluntary works, and they will then represent unto God, and testify with you, that you have

* It is customary in popish countries to offer large wax tapers, or other lights, to be burned before the image of a saint. See note p. 13.

† Images were not yet put away, but Latimer ventures to show that works of charity were to be preferred to them.

‡ One who is spiritually dead.

provided him a glorious place in your hearts. But beware, I say again, that you do not run so far into your voluntary works, that you quite forget your necessary works of mercy, which you are bound to keep: you must ever have a good respect unto the best and worthiest works towards God, to be done first and with most efficacy, and the other to be done secondarily. Thus if you do, with the other that I have spoken of before, you may come according to the tenour of your cards, and offer your oblations and prayers to our Lord Jesus Christ, who will both hear and accept them to your everlasting joy and glory, to which may he bring us, and all those whom he suffered death for. *Amen.*

THE SERMON OF THE PLOUGH,

Preached in the Shrouds* at Paul's Church in London, on the 18th day of January, anno 1548–9.

Romans xv. "All things which are written, are written for our erudition and knowledge. All things that are written in God's book, in the Bible book, in the book of the Holy Scripture, are written to be our doctrine." I told you in my first sermon,† honourable audience, that I purposed to declare unto you two things, the one, what seed should be sown in God's field, in God's plough land; and the other, who should be the sowers.

That is to say, what doctrine is to be taught in Christ's church and congregation, and what men should be the teachers and preachers of it. The first part I have told you in the three sermons past, in which I have assayed to set forth my plough, to prove what I could do. And now I shall tell you who are the ploughers; for God's word is seed to be sown in God's field, that is, the faithful congregation, and the preacher is the sower. And it is said in the gospel; "He that soweth, the husbandman, the ploughman, went forth to sow his seed." So that a preacher is compared to a ploughman, as it is in another place; "No man that putteth his hand to the plough, and looketh back, is apt for the kingdom of God." (Luke ix.) That is to say, let no preacher be negligent in doing his office. This is one of the places that has been racked,‡ as I told you of racking Scriptures, and I have been one of them myself that have racked it, I cry God mercy for it; and have been one of them that have believed, and have expounded it against religious persons that would forsake their order which they had professed, and would go out of their cloister: whereas indeed it relates not to monkery, nor makes

* The Shrouds were a covered place on the north side of the Cathedral where a congregation could be sheltered, when the severity of the weather prevented them from standing in the open air at Paul's Cross.

† The sermon here mentioned has not been preserved.

‡ Wrested or perverted.

at all for any such matter; but it is directly spoken of diligent preaching of the word of God. For preaching of the gospel is one of God's plough-works, and the preacher is one of God's ploughmen.

Be not offended with my similitude, in that I compare preaching to the labour and work of ploughing, and the preacher to a ploughman: ye may not be offended with this my similitude, though I have been unjustly slandered by some persons for such things. . . . . But as preachers must be wary and circumspect, that they give not any just occasion to be slandered and ill-spoken of by the hearers, so the auditors must not be offended without cause. For heaven is in the gospel likened unto a mustard-seed: it is compared also to a piece of leaven; and Christ saith, that at the last day he will come like a thief; and what dishonour is this to God? Or what derogation is this to heaven? You should not then, I say, be offended with my similitude, because I liken preaching to a ploughman's labour, and a prelate to a ploughman. But now you will ask me, whom I call a prelate? A prelate is that man, whatsoever he is, that has a flock to be taught by him; whosoever has any spiritual charge in the faithful congregation, and whosoever he is that has a cure of souls.

Well may the preacher and the ploughman be likened together: first, for their labour at all seasons of the year; for there is no time of the year in which the ploughman has not some special work to do; as in my country in Leicestershire, the ploughman has a time to set forth, and to assay his plough, and other times for other necessary works to be done. And they also may be likened together for the diversity of works, and variety of offices that they have to do. For as the ploughman first sets forth his plough, and then tills the land, and breaks it in furrows, and sometime ridges it up again; and at another time harrows it and clotteth it,* and sometimes dungs it and hedges it, digs it and weeds it, and makes it clean; so the prelate, the preacher, has many diverse offices to do. He has first a busy work to bring his parishioners to a right faith, as Paul calleth it; and not a swerving† faith, but to a faith that embraces Christ, and trusts to his merits; a lively faith, a justifying faith; a faith that makes a man righteous, without respect of works: as you have it very well declared and set forth in the Homily. He has then a

* Breaks the clods. † Wandering, changing.

busy work, I say, to bring his flock to a right faith, and then to confirm them in the same faith. Now casting them down with the law, and with threatenings of God for sin; now ridging them up again with the gospel, and with the promises of God's favour. Now weeding them, by telling them their faults, and making them forsake sin; now clotting them, by breaking their stony hearts, and by making them supple-hearted, and making them to have hearts of flesh; that is, soft hearts, and apt for doctrine to enter in. Now teaching to know God rightly, and to know their duty to God and their neighbours. Now exhorting them when they know their duty, that they do it, and be diligent in it; so that they have a continual work to do. Great is their business, and therefore great should be their hire. They have great labours, and therefore they ought to have good livings, that they may commodiously feed their flock; for the preaching of the word of God unto the people, is called meat: Scripture calls it meat; not strawberries, that come but once a year, and tarry not long, but are soon gone: but it is meat, it is not dainties. The people must have meat, that is familiar and continual, and daily given unto them to feed upon. Many make a strawberry of it, ministering it but once a year; but such do not the office of good prelates. For Christ saith, "Who think you is a wise and a faithful servant? He that giveth meat in due time." So that he must at all times convenient preach diligently: therefore saith he, "Who think ye is a faithful servant?" He speaks as though it were a rare thing to find such a one, and as though he should say, there are but few of them to be found in the world. And how few of them there are throughout this realm that give meat to their flock as they should do, the visiters can best tell. Too few, too few, the more is the pity, and never so few as now.

By this then it appears that a prelate, or any that has the cure of souls, must diligently and substantially work and labour. Therefore, saith Paul to Timothy, "He that desireth to have the office of a bishop, or a prelate, that man desireth a good work." Then if it is a good work, it is work; you can make but a work of it. It is God's work, God's plough, and that plough God would have still going. Such then as loiter and live idly, are not good prelates, or ministers. And of such as do not preach and teach, and do their duties, God saith by his prophet Jeremy, "Cursed

be the man that doth the work of God fraudulently, guilefully, or deceitfully; some books have it negligently or slackly." How many such prelates, how many such bishops, Lord, for thy mercy, are there now in England? And what shall we in this case do? shall we company with them? O Lord, for thy mercy! shall we not company with them? O Lord, whither shall we flee from them? But "Cursed be he that doth the work of God negligently or guilefully." A sore word for them that are negligent in discharging their office, or have done it fraudulently; for that is the thing which makes the people ill.

But it must be true that Christ saith, "Many are called, but few are chosen." (Matt. xxii.) Here I have an occasion by the way to say somewhat unto you; yea, for the place that I alleged unto you before out of Jeremy, the forty-eighth chapter. And it was spoken of a spiritual work of God, a work that was commanded to be done, and it was of shedding blood, and of destroying the cities of Moab. For, saith he, "Cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from shedding of blood." As Saul, when he kept back the sword from shedding of blood, at the time he was sent against Amalek, was refused of God for being disobedient to God's commandment, in that he spared Agag the king. So that place of the prophet was spoken of them that went to the destruction of the cities of Moab, among which there was one called Nebo, which was much reproved for idolatry, superstition, pride, avarice, cruelty, tyranny, and hardness of heart; and for these sins was plagued of God and destroyed.

Now what shall we say of these rich citizens of London? what shall I say of them? Shall I call them proud men of London, malicious men of London, merciless men of London? No, no, I may not say so; they will be offended with me then. Yet must I speak. For is there not reigning in London as much pride, as much covetousness, as much cruelty, as much oppression, and as much superstition, as there was in Nebo? Yes, I think, and much more too. Therefore I say, Repent, O London! repent, repent. Thou hearest thy faults told thee, amend them, amend them. I think, if Nebo had had the preaching that thou hast, they would have converted. And, you rulers and officers, be wise and circumspect, look to your charge, and see you do your duties; and rather be glad to amend your ill living than be angry when you are warned or told of your fault.

What ado was there made in London at a certain man, because he said, (and indeed at that time on a just cause,) "Burgesses," quoth he, "nay, butterflies."* What ado there was for that word! and yet would that they were no worse than butterflies. Butterflies do but their nature; the butterfly is not covetous, is not greedy of other men's goods; is not full of envy and hatred, is not malicious, is not cruel, is not merciless. The butterfly glories not in her own deeds, nor prefers the traditions of men before God's word; it commits not idolatry, nor worships false gods. But London cannot abide to be rebuked; such is the nature of men. If they are pricked, they will kick; if they are galled, they will wince; but yet they will not amend their faults, they will not be ill spoken of. But how shall I speak well of them? If you could be content to receive and follow the word of God, and favour good preachers, if you could bear to be told of your faults, if you could amend when you hear of them, if you could be glad to reform that which is amiss: if I might see any such inclination in you, that you would leave off being merciless, and begin to be charitable, I would then hope well of you, I would then speak well of you. But London was never so ill as it is now. In times past men were full of pity and compassion, but now there is no pity; for in London their brother shall die in the streets for cold, he shall lie sick at the door, and perish there for hunger. Was there ever more unmercifulness in Nebo? I think not. In times past, when any rich man died in London, they were wont to help the poor scholars of the universities with exhibitions. When any man died, they would bequeath great sums of money toward the relief of the poor. When I was a scholar in Cambridge myself, I heard very good report of London, and knew many that had relief from the rich men of London; but now I hear no such good report, and yet I inquire of it, and hearken for it; but now charity is waxen cold, none helps the scholar nor yet the poor. And in those days, what did they when they helped the scholars? They maintained and gave them livings who were very papists, and professed the pope's doctrine:

* This was spoken in allusion to the fickle conduct of many of the London citizens a few years before. In the latter part of the reign of Henry VIII., when the king hearkened again to his popish counsellors, many citizens became favourers of Romanism who had promoted the Reformation at first.

and now that the knowledge of God's word is brought to light, and many earnestly study and labour to set it forth, now hardly any man helps to maintain them.

Oh London, London, repent, repent; for I think God is more displeased with London than ever he was with the city of Nebo. Repent therefore, repent, London, and remember that the same God liveth now that punished Nebo, even the same God, and none other; and he will punish sin as well now as he did then: and he will punish the iniquity of London, as well as he did them of Nebo. Amend therefore. And you that are prelates, look well to your office; for right prelating is busy labouring, and not lording. Therefore preach and teach, and let your plough be going. Ye lords, I say, that live like loiterers, look well to your office—the plough is your office and charge. If you live idle and loiter, you do not your duty, you follow not your vocation; let your plough therefore be going, and not cease, that the ground may bring forth fruit.

But now methinks I hear one say unto me: "Wot ye what you say? Is it a work? Is it a labour? How then hath it happened, that we have had for so many hundred years so many unpreaching prelates, lording loiterers, and idle ministers?" You would have me here to make answer, and to show the cause thereof. Nay, this land is not for me to plough, it is too stony, too thorny, too hard for me to plough. They have so many things that make for them, so many things to say for themselves, that it is not for my weak team to plough them. They have to say for themselves, long customs, ceremonies, and authority, placing in parliament, and many things more. And I fear this land is not yet ripe to be ploughed: for, as the saying is, it lacketh weathering: it lacketh weathering, at least it is not for me to plough. For what shall I look for among thorns, but pricking and scratching? What among stones, but stumbling? What, I had almost said, among serpents, but stinging? But this much I dare say, that since lording and loitering hath come up, preaching hath come down, contrary to the apostles' time: for they preached and lorded not, and now they lord and preach not. For they that are lords will ill go to plough: it is no meet office for them; it is not seeming for their estate. Thus came up lording loiterers: thus crept in unpreaching prelates, and so have they long continued. For how many unlearned prelates have we now at this day! And no marvel; for if the plough-

men that now are, were made lords, they would give over ploughing; they would leave off their labour, and fall to lording outright, and let the plough stand: and then both ploughs not walking,* nothing should be in the commonweal but hunger. For ever since the prelates were made lords and nobles, their plough standeth, there is no work done, the people starve. They hawk, they hunt, they card, they dice, they pastime in their prelacies with gallant gentlemen, with their dancing minions, and with their fresh companions, so that ploughing is set aside. And by the lording and loitering, preaching and ploughing is clean gone. And thus, if the ploughmen of the country were as negligent in their office as prelates are, we should not long live, for lack of sustenance. And as it is necessary to have this ploughing for the sustentation of the body, so must we have also the other for the satisfaction of the soul, or else we cannot live long spiritually. For as the body wastes and consumes away for lack of bodily meat, so the soul pines away for default of spiritual meat. But there are two kinds of enclosing, to hinder both these kinds of ploughing; the one is an enclosing to hinder the bodily ploughing, and the other to hinder the holy day ploughing, the church ploughing.

The bodily ploughing is taken in and enclosed for the gain of individuals. For what man will let go, or diminish his private advantage for a commonwealth? And who will sustain any damage for public benefit? The other plough also no man is diligent to set forward, and no man will hearken to it. But to hinder it all men's ears are open; yea, and there are a great many of this kind of ploughmen, who are very busy, and would seem to be very good workmen: I fear some are rather mock-gospellers, than faithful ploughmen. I know many myself that profess the gospel, and live nothing thereafter. I know them, and have been conversant with some of them. I know them, and I speak it with a heavy heart, there is as little charity and good† living in them as in any others, according to that which Christ said in the gospel to the great number of people that followed him; as though they had an earnest zeal for his doctrine, whereas indeed they had it not; "Ye follow me, saith he, not because ye have seen the signs and miracles that I have done; but because ye have eaten the bread, and

* Working. † Holy and virtuous.

refreshed your bodies, therefore you follow me." So that I think, many now-a-days profess the gospel for the living sake, not for the love they bear to God's word. But they that will be true ploughmen, must work faithfully for God's sake, for the edifying of their brethren. And as diligently as the husbandman plougheth for the sustentation of the body, so diligently must the prelates and ministers labour for the feeding of the soul; both the ploughs must still be going, as most necessary for man. And wherefore are magistrates ordained, but that the tranquillity of the commonweal may be confirmed, limiting both ploughs?

But now for the fault of unpreaching prelates, methinks I could guess what might be said for excusing of them. They are so troubled with lordly living, they are so placed in palaces, couched in courts, ruffling in their rents, dancing in their dominions, burdened with ambassages, pampering themselves like a monk that maketh his jubilee; and moiling* in their gay manors and mansions, and so troubled with loitering in their lordships, that they cannot attend it. They are otherwise occupied, some in the king's matters, some are ambassadors, some of the privy council, some to furnish the court, some are lords of the parliament, some are presidents, and some comptrollers of mints.†

Well, well, is this their duty? Is this their office? Is this their calling? Should we have ministers of the church to be comptrollers of the mints? Is this a meet office for a priest that hath cure of souls? Is this his charge? I would here ask one question; I would fain know who controlleth the devil at home in his parish, while he controlleth the mint? If the apostles might not leave the office of preaching to the deacons, shall one leave it for minting? I cannot tell you; but the saying is, that since priests have been minters, money hath been worse than it was before. And they say that the evilness of money hath made all things dearer. And in this behalf I must speak to England. "Hear, my country, England," as Paul said in his first epistle to the Corinthians, the sixth chapter; for Paul was no sitting bishop, but a walking and a preaching bishop—but when he went from them, he left there behind him the plough going still; for he wrote unto them, and rebuked them for

* Drudging.

† The popish prelates who are described by Latimer in this and the preceding paragraphs, were accustomed to hold offices of state, and to be concerned in the government.

going to law, and pleading their causes before heathen judges: "Is there," saith he, "among you no wise man, to be an arbitrator in matters of judgment? What, not one of all that can judge between brother and brother; but one brother goeth to law with another, and that before heathen judges? Appoint those for judges that are most abject and vile in the congregation." Which he speaks to rebuke them; "For," saith he, "I speak it to your shame." So, England, I speak it to thy shame; is there never a nobleman to be a lord president, but it must be a prelate? Is there never a wise man in the realm to be a comptroller of the mint? I speak it to your shame. I speak it to your shame. If there be never a wise man, make a waterbearer, a tinker, a cobbler, a slave, a page, comptroller of the mint: make a mean gentleman, a groom, a yeoman, or a poor beggar, lord president.

Thus I speak, not that I would have it so; but to your shame, if there is never a gentleman meet or able to be lord president. For why are not the noblemen and young gentlemen of England so brought up in knowledge of God, and in learning, that they may be able to execute offices in the commonweal? The king has a great many wards, and I trow there is a court of wards; why is there not a school for the wards, as well as there is a court for their lands? Why are they not set in schools where they may learn? Or why are they not sent to the universities, that they may be able to serve the king when they come to age? If the wards and young gentlemen were well brought up in learning, and in the knowledge of God, they would not when they come to age so much give themselves to other vanities. And if the nobility be well trained in godly learning, the people would follow the same train. For truly, such as the noblemen are, such will the people be. And now, the only cause why noblemen are not made lord presidents, is because they have not been brought up in learning.*

Therefore for the love of God appoint teachers and schoolmasters, you that have charge of youth; and give the teachers stipends worthy their pains, that they may bring them up in grammar, in logic, in rhetoric, in philosophy, in the civil law, and in that which I cannot leave

* The nation was then emerging from popery, or Latimer would not have been allowed to make such remarks; the state of things to which he refers existed in the days of Romanism.

unspoken of, the word of God. Thanks be unto God, the nobility otherwise is very well brought up in learning and godliness, to the great joy and comfort of England; so that there is now good hope in the youth, that we shall another day have a flourishing commonweal, considering their godly education. Yea, and there are already noblemen enough, though not so many as I would wish, able to be lord presidents, and wise men enough for the mint. And as unmeet a thing it is for bishops to be lord presidents, or priests to be minters, as it was for the Corinthians to plead matters of variance before heathen judges. It is also a slander to the noblemen, as though they lacked wisdom and learning to be able for such offices, or else were no men of conscience, or else were not meet to be trusted, and able for such offices. And a prelate has a charge and cure otherwise; and therefore he cannot discharge his duty and be a lord president too. For a presidentship requireth a whole man; and a bishop cannot be two men. A bishop has his office, a flock to teach, to look unto; and therefore he cannot meddle with another office, which alone requires a whole man; he should therefore give it over to whom it is meet, and labour in his own business; as Paul writes to the Thessalonians, "Let every man do his own business, and follow his calling." Let the priest preach, and the nobleman handle the temporal matters. Moses was a marvellous man, a good man: Moses was a wonderful man, and did his duty, being a married man: we lack such as Moses was. Well, I would all men would look to their duty, as God hath called them, and then we should have a flourishing Christian commonweal.

And now I would ask a strange question; who is the most diligent bishop and prelate in all England, that passes all the rest in doing his office? I can tell, for I know who it is; I know him well. But now I think I see you listening and hearkening that I should name him. There is one that passes all the other, and is the most diligent prelate and preacher in all England. And will ye know who it is? I will tell you—it is the Devil. He is the most diligent preacher of all others; he is never out of his diocese; he is never from his cure: you shall never find him unoccupied; he is ever in his parish; he keeps residence at all times; you shall never find him out of the way; call for him when you will he is ever at home. He

is the most diligent preacher in all the realm; he is ever at his plough; no lording nor loitering can hinder him; he is ever applying his business, you shall never find him idle I warrant you. And his office is to hinder religion, to maintain superstition, to set up idolatry, to teach all kinds of popery. He is ready as can be wished for to set forth his plough; to devise as many ways as can be to deface and obscure God's glory. Where the devil is resident, and has his plough going, there away with books and up with candles;* away with bibles and up with beads; away with the light of the gospel, and up with the light of candles, yea, at noon-day. Where the devil is resident, that he may prevail, up with all superstition and idolatry; censing, painting of images, candles, palms, ashes, holy water, and new service of men's inventing; as though man could invent a better way to honour God with, than God himself hath appointed. Down with Christ's cross, up with purgatory pickpurse,† up with him, the popish purgatory, I mean. Away with clothing the naked, the poor and impotent, up with decking of images, and gay garnishing of stocks and stones: up with man's traditions and his laws, down with God's traditions and his most holy word. Down with the old honour due to God, and up with the new god's honour. Let all things be done in Latin: there must be nothing but Latin, not so much as "Remember man that thou art ashes, and into ashes shalt thou return:" which are the words that the minister speaketh unto the ignorant people, when he gives them ashes upon Ash-Wednesday, but it must be spoken in Latin. God's word may in no wise be translated into English.

Oh that our prelates would be as diligent to sow the corn of good doctrine, as Satan is to sow cockle and darnel! And this is the devilish ploughing, which worketh to have things in Latin, and hinders the fruitful edification. But here some man will say to me, What, sir, are you so privy to the devil's counsel that you know all this to be true?—Truly I know him too well, and have obeyed him a little too much in condescending to some follies; and I know him as other men do, yea that he is ever occupied, and ever busy in following his plough. I know by

* The lighted tapers used in the popish services.

† Alluding to the vast sums extorted under pretence of praying for the souls in purgatory.

St. Peter, who saith of him, "He goeth about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." I would have this text well viewed and examined, every word of it: "He goeth about" in every corner of his diocese; he goeth on visitation daily, he leaves no place of his cure unvisited: he walks round about from place to place, and ceases not. "As a lion," that is, strongly, boldly, and proudly; stately and fiercely, with haughty looks, with his proud countenances, with his stately braggings. "Roaring;" for he lets not any occasion slip, to speak or to roar out when he seeth his time. "He goeth about seeking," and not sleeping, as our bishops do; but he seeketh diligently, he searcheth diligently all corners, where he may have his prey. He roveth abroad in every place of his diocese; he standeth not still, he is never at rest, but ever in hand with his plough, that it may go forward. But there was never such a preacher in England as he is. Who is able to tell his diligent preaching, which every day, and every hour, labours to sow cockle and darnel, that he may bring out of form, and out of estimation and renown, the institution of the Lord's supper and Christ's cross? For there he lost his right; for Christ said, "Now is the judgment of this world, and the prince of this world shall be cast out. And as Moses did lift up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lift up. (John iii.) And when I shall be lift up from the earth, I will draw all things unto myself."—For the devil was disappointed of his purpose; for he thought all to be his own: and when he had once brought Christ to the cross, he thought all was sure.

But there lost he all reigning: for Christ said, "I will draw all things to myself." He means, drawing of man's soul to salvation. And that he said he would do by his own self; not by any other sacrifice. He meant by his own sacrifice on the cross, where he offered himself for the redemption of mankind; and not the sacrifice of the mass to be offered by another. For who can offer him but himself? He was both the offerer and the offering. And this is the mark at which the devil shooteth, to evacuate* the cross of Christ, and to mingle the institution of the Lord's supper; which although he cannot bring to pass, yet he goes about by his sleights and subtle means to frustrate the same; and these fifteen hundred years he has been a doer, only purposing to make Christ's death of small efficacy and virtue.

* To empty, or make of none effect.

For whereas Christ, "according as the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness," so would he himself be exalted; that thereby as many as trusted in him should have salvation; but the devil would none of that. They would have us saved by a daily oblation propitiatory; by a sacrifice expiatory, or remissory.*

Now if I should preach in the country, among the unlearned, I would tell what propitiatory, expiatory, and remissory mean; but here is a learned auditory: yet for them that are unlearned I will expound it. Propitiatory, expiatory, remissory, or satisfactory, for they signify all one thing in effect, and it is nothing else but whereby to obtain remission of sins, and to have salvation. And this way the devil used to evacuate the death of Christ, that we might have affiance in other things, as in the daily sacrifice of the priest; whereas Christ would have us to trust in his sacrifice alone. So he was "the lamb that hath been slain from the beginning of the world;" and therefore he is called "a continual sacrifice;" and not for the continuance of the mass, as the blanchers have blanched it, and wrested it; and as I myself did once mistake it. But Paul saith, "By himself, and by none other, Christ made purgation and satisfaction for the whole world."

Would that this word, *by himself*, had been better weighed and looked upon, and to make them holy; for Christ is a *continual* sacrifice, in effect, fruit, and operation; that like as they, who seeing the serpent hang up in the desert, were put in remembrance of Christ's death, in whom as many as believed were saved; so all men that trusted in the death of Christ shall be saved, as well they that were before, as they that came after. For he was a continual sacrifice, as I said, in effect, fruit, operation, and virtue. As though he had from the beginning of the world, and continually should to the world's end, hang still on the cross; and he is as fresh hanging on the cross now, to them that believe and trust in him, as he was fifteen hundred years ago, when he was crucified.

Then let us trust upon his death alone, and look for no other sacrifice propitiatory, than the same bloody sacrifice, the lively sacrifice; and not the dry sacrifice,† but a

* In the Romish church the mass is offered daily, as a sacrifice for the remission of sins.

† The papists distinguish the sacrifice of the mass from the actual death of Christ upon the cross by calling it "an unbloody sacrifice."

bloody sacrifice. For Christ himself said, "It is perfectly finished:" "I have taken at my Father's hand the dispensation of redeeming mankind. I have wrought man's redemption, and have despatched the matter." Why then mingle ye him? Why do ye divide him? Why make you of him more sacrifices than one? Paul saith, "Christ our passover is offered up;" so that the thing is done, and Christ hath done it, and he hath done it once for all: and it was a bloody sacrifice, not a dry sacrifice.

Why then, it is not the mass that avails or profits for the quick and the dead. Woe to thee, O devil, woe to thee, that hast prevailed so far and so long; that hast made England to worship false gods, forsaking Christ their Lord. Woe to thee, devil, woe to thee, devil, and all thy angels. If Christ by his death draw all things to himself, and draws all men to salvation, and to heavenly bliss, that trust in him; then the priests at the mass, at the popish mass, I say, what can they draw, when Christ draweth all, but lands and goods from the right heirs? The priests draw goods and riches, benefices and promotions to themselves; and such as believed in their sacrifices they draw to the devil. But Christ is he that draweth souls unto him by his bloody sacrifice. What have we to do then, but to eat in the Lord at his supper?

What other service have we to do to him, and what other sacrifice have we to offer, but the mortification of our flesh? What other oblation have we to make, but of obedience, of good living, of good works, and of helping our neighbours? But as for our redemption, it is done already, it cannot be better: Christ has done that so well, that it cannot be amended. It cannot be devised how to make that any better than he hath done it. But the devil, by the help of that Italian bishop* yonder, his chaplain, has laboured by all means that he might, to frustrate the death of Christ and the merits of his passion. And they have devised for that purpose to make us believe in other vain things by his pardons; as to have remission of sins for praying on hallowed beads; for drinking of the bakehouse bowl; as a canon of Waltham Abbey once told me, that whenever they put their loaves of bread into the oven, as many as drank of the pardon bowl should have pardon for drinking of it. A mad thing, to give pardon to a bowl! Then to pope Alexander's holy water, to hallowed bells, palms, candles, ashes,

* The pope.

and what not! And of these things, every one has taken away some part of Christ's sanctification; every one has robbed some part of Christ's passion and cross, and has mingled Christ's death, and has been made to be propitiatory and satisfactory, and to put away sin. Yea, and Alexander's holy water yet at this day remains in England, and is used for a remedy against spirits, and to chase away devils; yea, and I would this had been the worst. I would this were the worst. But woe worth thee, O devil, that hast prevailed to evacuate Christ's cross, and to mingle the Lord's supper. These are the Italian bishop's devices, and the devil hath shot at this mark to frustrate the cross of Christ: he shot at this mark long before Christ came; he shot at it four thousand years before Christ hanged on the cross, or suffered his passion.

For the brazen serpent was set up in the wilderness, to put men in remembrance of Christ's coming: that as they which beheld the brazen serpent were healed of their bodily diseases, so they that looked spiritually upon Christ that was to come, in him should be saved spiritually from the devil. The serpent was set up in memory of Christ to come, but the devil found means to steal away the memory of Christ's coming, and brought the people to worship the serpent itself, and to cense him, to honour him, and to offer to him, to worship him, and to make an idol of him. And this was done by the market men that I told you of. And the clerk of the market did it for the lucre and advantage of his master, that thereby his honour might increase; for by Christ's death he could have but small worldly advantage. And so even now has he certain blanchers* belonging to the market, to stop the light of the gospel, and to hinder the king's proceedings in setting forth the word and glory of God. And when the king's majesty, with the advice of his honourable council, goes about to promote God's word, and to set an order in matters of religion, there shall not lack blanchers that will say: as for images, whereas they have used to be censed, and to have candles offered unto them, none are so foolish to do it to the stock or stone, or to the image itself; but it is done to God and his honour, before the image. And though they should abuse it, these blanchers will be ready to whisper the king in the ear, and to tell him, that this abuse is but a small matter; and that

* White washers, persons who gloss over popish doctrines and practices.

the same, with all other like abuses in the church, may be reformed easily. "It is but a little abuse, say they, and it may be easily amended. But it should not be taken in hand at the first, for fear of trouble or further inconveniences. The people will not bear sudden alterations; an insurrection may be made after sudden mutation, which may be to the great harm and loss of the realm. Therefore all things shall be well, but not out of hand, for fear of further business." These are the blanchers that hitherto have stopped the word of God, and hindered the true setting forth of the same. There are so many put-offs, so many put-byes, so many respects and considerations of worldly wisdom. And I doubt not but there were blanchers in the old time to whisper in the ear of good king Hezekiah, for the maintenance of idolatry done to the brazen serpent, as well as there have been now of late, and are now, that can blanch the abuse of images, and other like things.

But good king Hezekiah would not be so blinded; he was like to Apollos, fervent in spirit. He would give no ear to the blanchers; he was not moved with these worldly respects, with these prudent considerations, with these policies: he feared not insurrections of the people: he feared not lest his people would not bear the glory of God, but he (without any of these respects, or policies, or considerations, like a good king, for God's sake and for conscience sake) presently plucked down the brazen serpent, and destroyed it utterly, and beat it to powder. He out of hand cast out all images, he destroyed all idolatry, and clearly extirpated all superstition. He would not hear these blanchers and worldly wise men, but without delay followed God's cause, and destroyed all idolatry out of hand. Thus did the good King Hezekiah; for he was like Apollos, fervent in spirit, and diligent to promote God's glory.

And good hope there is that it shall be likewise here in England; for the king's majesty* is so brought up in knowledge, virtue, and godliness, that it is not to be mistrusted but that we shall have all things well, and that the glory of God shall be spread abroad throughout all parts of the realm, if the prelates will diligently apply to their plough, and be preachers rather than lords. But our blanchers, who will be lords, and no labourers, when they are commanded to go and reside upon their cures, and preach in

* Edward VI. had then just succeeded to the throne, and the grosser corruptions of the church of Rome were being removed.

their benefices, they would say, Why? I have set a deputy there; I have a deputy that looks well to my flock, who shall discharge my duty. A deputy, quoth he, I looked for that word all this while. And what a deputy must he be, trow ye? Even one like himself; he must be a Canonist: that is to say, one that is brought up in the study of the pope's laws and decrees; one that will set forth papistry as well as himself will do; and one that will maintain all superstition and idolatry; and one that will not at all, or else very weakly, resist the devil's plough; yea, happy it is, if he take no part with the devil: and where he should be an enemy to him, it is well if he take not the devil's part against Christ. But in the mean time the prelates take their pleasures. They are lords, and no labourers; but the devil is diligent at his plough. He is no unpreaching prelate: he is no lordly loiterer from his cure; but a busy ploughman; . . . . he still applieth his business.—Therefore, ye unpreaching prelates, learn of the devil: to be diligent in doing of your office, learn of the devil: and if you will not learn of God, nor good men, for shame learn of the devil; "I speak it for your shame:" if you will not learn of God, nor good men, to be diligent in your office, learn of the devil. Howbeit there is now very good hope that the king's majesty, being by the help of good governance of his most honourable counsellors, trained and brought up in learning, and knowledge of God's word, will shortly provide a remedy, and set an order herein; which thing that it may so be, let us pray for him. Pray for him, good people; pray for him. You have great cause and need to pray for him.

ON

THE PASSION OF CHRIST,

BEING

*The Seventh Sermon preached before King Edward, within the preaching place in the garden of the palace at Westminster, April 19th, 1549.**

Romans xv.

"*All things that are written, they are written to be our doctrine.*"

By occasion of this text, most honourable audience, I have walked this Lent in the broad field of Scripture, and used my liberty, and treated of such matters as I thought meet for this auditory. I have had to do with many states, even with the highest of all. I have treated of the duty of kings, of the duty of magistrates and judges, of the duty of prelates; allowing that which is good, and disallowing the contrary. I have taught that we are all sinners; I think there is not one of us all, either preacher or hearers, but may be amended, and redress our lives. We may all say, yea, all of us, "We have offended and sinned with our forefathers," there is none of us all; but have in sundry things grievously offended almighty God. I have treated of many faults, and rebuked many kinds of sins. I intend to-day, by God's grace, to show you the remedy of sin. We are in the place of repentance, now is the time to call for mercy, whilst we are in this world; we all are sinners, even the best of us all. Therefore it is good to hear the remedy of sin.

* During Lent that year Latimer preached seven sermons before king Edward VI. and his court. A pulpit was set up in the garden, the chapel being too small for the numbers that attended. In the six first of these sermons Latimer treated very fully of the duty of kings and those in authority, and boldly reproved the unjust and iniquitous practices then prevalent. These sermons are very interesting, but they are *historical* rather than *doctrinal;* this seventh sermon refers more particularly to the Scriptural doctrines of truth.

This day is commonly called Good Friday. Although every day ought to be with us Good Friday, yet this day we are accustomed especially to have a commemoration and remembrance of the sufferings of our Saviour Jesus Christ. This day we have in memory his bitter passion and death, which is the remedy of our sin. Therefore I intend to treat of a part of the history of his passion; I am not able to treat of all. That I may do this the better, and that it may be to the honour of God, and the edification of your souls, and mine also, I shall desire you to pray, &c. In this prayer I desire you to remember the souls departed; with lauds and praise to Almighty God; that he vouchsafed to assist them at the hour of their death.* In so doing you shall be put in remembrance to pray for yourselves, that it may please God to assist and comfort you in the agonies and pains of death.

The place that I will treat of is the twenty-sixth chapter of St. Matthew. Howbeit, as I treat of it, I will borrow part of St. Mark, and part of St. Luke: for they have somewhat that St. Matthew hath not. The text is, "Then when Jesus came;" some have *in villam*, some *in agrum*, some *in prædium*. But it is all one; whether Christ came into a grange,† into a piece of land, or into a field, it makes no matter; call it what you will. At that time he had come into an honest man's house, and there eaten his paschal lamb, and instituted and celebrated the Lord's Supper, and set forth the blessed communion; then when this was done, he took his way to the place where he knew Judas would come. It was a solitary place, and thither he went with his eleven apostles: for Judas, the twelfth, was about his business, he was occupied about his merchandise, and was providing among the bishops and priests, to come with an ambushment of Jews to take our Saviour Jesus Christ.

And when he was come into the field or grange, this village, or farm-place which was called Gethsemane, there was a garden, saith Luke, into which he went, and left eight of his disciples without; howbeit he appointed them what they should do. He saith, "Sit you here, whilst I go yonder and pray." He told them that he went to pray, to admonish them what they should do—to fall to prayer

* Not praying for their deliverance from purgatory, according to the Romish custom.

† A lonely farm.

as he did. He left them there, and took with him but three, Peter, James, and John, to teach us that a solitary place is fit for prayer. Then when he was come into this garden, He began to tremble, insomuch that he said, "My soul is heavy and pensive even unto death."

This is a notable place, and one of the most especial and chiefest of all that are in the story of the passion of Christ. Here is our remedy. Here we must consider all his doings and sayings, for our learning, for our edification, for our comfort and consolation.

First of all, he set his three disciples that he took with him an order, and told them what they should do, saying, "Sit here, and pray that ye enter not into temptation." But of that I will treat afterward. Now when he was in the garden, "he began to be heavy," pensive, heavy-hearted. I like not Origen's playing with this word "began;" it was a perfect heaviness: it was such a one as a greater never was seen—it was not merely the beginning of a sorrow.

We have great cause to thank God for these doctors,* but yet I would not have them always allowed. They have handled many points of our faith very godly; and we may have a great support from them in many things; we could not well do without them: but yet I would not have men sworn to them; and so addicted, as to take hand over head whatsoever they say: it were a great inconvenience so to do.

Well, let us go forward. He took Peter, James, and John, into this garden. And why did he take them with him, rather than others? They were those that he had taken before, to whom he had revealed in the mount the transfiguration, and declaration of his deity, to see the revelation of the majesty of his godhead: now in the garden he revealed to the same the infirmity of his manhood:—because they had tasted the sweet, he would they should taste also the sour. He took these with him at both times: for two or three are enough to bear witness. And he began to be heavy in his mind: he was greatly vexed within himself, he was sore afflicted, he was in great heaviness. He had been heavy many times before; and he had suffered great afflictions in his soul, as for the blindness of the Jews, and other causes, and he was likely to suffer more pangs of pain in his body. But this pang was greater

* Learned men.

than any he ever suffered: yea, it was a greater torment unto him, I think a greater pain than when he was hanged on the cross, than when the four nails were knocked and driven through his hands and feet, than when the sharp crown of thorns was thrust on his head. This was the heaviness and pensiveness of his heart, the agony of the spirit. And as the soul is more precious than the body, even so are the pains of the soul more grievous than the pains of the body: therefore, there is one who writes, "The horror and irksomeness of death, are sorer than death itself." This is the most grievous pain that Christ ever suffered, even this pang which he suffered in the garden. It is one of the most noble places in the whole story of the passion, when he said, "My soul is heavy to death." And "when he began to quiver, to shake." The grievousness of it is declared by this prayer that he made, "Father, if it be possible, away with this cup: rid me of it." He understood by this cup his pains of death; for he knew well enough, that his passion was at hand, that Judas was coming upon him with the Jews to take him.

There was now offered unto him the image of death, the image, the sense, the feeling of hell: for death and hell go both together. I will treat of this image of hell, which is death. Truly no man can show it perfectly, yet I will do the best I can, to make you understand the grievous pains that our Saviour Christ was in, when he was in the garden. As man's power is not able to bear it, so no man's tongue is able to express it. Painters paint death like a man without skin, and as a body having nothing but bones. And hell they paint with horrible flames of burning fire: they bungle somewhat at it, they come nothing near it. But this is not true painting. No painter can paint hell, unless he could paint the torment and condemnation both of body and soul; the possession and having of all infelicity. This is hell, this is the image of death, this is hell—such an evil-favoured face, such an ugly countenance, such a horrible visage our Saviour Christ saw of death and hell in the garden. There is no pleasure in beholding it, but more pain than any tongue can tell. Death and hell took unto them this evil-favoured face of sin and through sin. This sin is so highly hated of God, that he pronounces it worthy to be punished with the loss of all felicity, with the feeling of infelicity. Death and hell are not only the wages, the reward, the stipend

of sin: but they are brought into the world by sin, "through sin death entered into the world," saith St. Paul. Moses showeth the first coming in of it into the world: whereas our first father Adam was set at liberty to live for ever, yet God forbidding him to eat of the apple, told him: "If thou meddle with this fruit, thou and all thy posterity shall fall into necessity of death; from ever living, thou and all thy posterity shall be subject to death." Here came in death and hell; sin was their mother; therefore they must have such an image as their mother sin would give them.

An ugly thing and a horrible image must it needs be that is brought in by such a thing so hated of God; yea, this face* of death and hell is so terrible, that such as have been wicked men, had rather be hanged than abide it. As Ahithophel, that traitor to David, like an ambitious wretch, thought to have come to higher promotion; and therefore conspired with Absalom against his master David. He, when he saw his counsel took no place, goes and hangs himself, in contemplation of this evil-favoured face of death. Judas, also, when he came with ambushments to take his master Christ, when he beheld this horrible face, hanged himself. Yea the elect people of God, the faithful, beholding his face, though God hath always preserved them, (such a good God he is to them that believe in him, that "he will not suffer them to be tempted above that which they are able to bear;") yet for all that, there is nothing that they complain of more than this horror of death. Go to Job, what saith he? "Woe worth the day that I was born, my soul would be hanged," saying in his pangs almost he wist not what. This was when with the eye of his conscience, and the inward man, he beheld the horror of death and hell; not for any bodily pain he suffered; for when he had boils, blotches, blains and scabs, he suffered them patiently: he could say then, "If we have received good things of God, why should we not likewise suffer evil?"

It was not for any such thing that he was so vexed; but the sight of this face* of death and hell was offered to him in so lively a manner, that he would have been out of this world. It was this evil-favoured face of death that so troubled him. King David also said, in contemplation of this uglisome face, "I have been sore vexed with sighing

* Appearance.

and mourning, mine eye hath been greatly troubled in my rage." A strange thing;—when he had to fight with Goliath, that monstrous giant, who was able to have eaten him, he could abide him, and was nothing afraid. And now what a work? What exclamations he makes at the sight of death? Jonah likewise was bold enough to bid the shipmen cast him into the sea—he had not seen that face and visage; but when he was in the whale's belly, and had there the beholding of it, in what terror and distress he abode! Hezekiah when he saw Sennacherib besieging his city on every side most violently, was not afraid of the great host and mighty army that was like to destroy him, yet he was afraid of death! When the prophet came unto him, and said, "Set thy house in order, for thou shalt surely die, and not live," (2 Kings xx.) it struck him so to the heart that he fell a weeping. O Lord, what horror was this! There are some writers who say, that Peter, James, and John were in this feeling at the same time; and that Peter, when he said, "Depart from me, O Lord, for I am a sinful man," tasted some part of it: he was so astonished, he wist not what to say. It was not long that they were in this anguish; some say longer, some shorter: but Christ was ready to comfort them, and said to Peter, "Be not afraid." A friend of mine told me of a certain woman, that was eighteen years together in it. I knew a man myself, Bilney, little Bilney,* that blessed martyr of God, when he had borne his fagot,† and was come again to Cambridge, had such conflicts within himself, beholding this image of death, that his friends were afraid to let him be alone; they were fain to be with him day and night, and comforted him as they could, but no comforts would serve. As for the comfortable places of Scripture, to bring them unto him, was as though a man would run him through the heart with a sword: yet afterwards, for all this, he was revived, and took his death patiently, and died well against the tyrannical see of Rome. Woe will be to that bishop who had the examination of him, if he repented not.

* Bilney had been induced by the papists to recant, but suffered such inward torment of mind for his apostasy, that he could not rest till he had again openly professed the gospel, for which he was again apprehended and was burned in A. D. 1531. Bilney was one of Latimer's earliest instructors, and very intimate with him.

† Recanted.

Here is a good lesson for you, my friends; if ever you come in danger, in durance, in prison for God's quarrel, and his sake, (as he did for purgatory matters, and was put to bear a fagot for preaching the true word of God against pilgrimages, and such matters,) I will advise you first, and above all things, to abjure all your friends, and all your friendships, leave not one unabjured: it is they that shall undo you, and not your enemies!

It was his very friends that brought Bilney to it. By this it may somewhat appear what our Saviour Christ suffered; he doth not dissemble it himself when he saith, "My soul is heavy to death:" he was in so sore an agony, that there issued out of him, as I shall treat of anon, drops of blood.

An uglisome thing surely, which this fact and deed shows us, what horrible pains he was in for our sakes. But you will say, How can this be? It were possible that I, and such as are great sinners, should suffer such affliction; but the Son of God, our Saviour Christ, who never sinned, how can this be, that he should be thus handled? He never deserved it.

I will tell you how; we must consider our Saviour Christ two ways; one way in his manhood, another in his godhead. Some places of Scripture must be referred to his Deity, and some to his humanity. In his godhead he suffered nothing, but now he made himself void of his Deity; as Scripture saith, "Whereas he was in the form of God, he emptied himself of it, he hid it, and used himself as though he had not had it;" he would not help himself with his godhead; "he humbled himself with all obedience unto death, even to the death of the cross:" this was as he was man, he took upon him our sins. Not the work of sin, I mean not so, not to do it, not to commit it, but to purge it, to cleanse it, to bear the stipend of it: and that way he was the greatest sinner of the world; he bare all the sin of the world on his back; he would become debtor for it.

Now to sustain and suffer the dolors* of death, is not to sin: but he came into this world with his passion to purge our sins. Now what he suffered in the garden is one of the bitterest parts of all his passion: this fear of death was the bitterest pain that ever he abode, due to

* Sorrows, griefs.

sin which he never did, but he became debtor for us. All this he suffered for us; this he did to satisfy for our sins.

It is as if I owed another man twenty thousand pounds, and should be required to pay it out of hand, or else go to the dungeon of Ludgate;* and when I am going to prison, one of my friends should come and ask, "Whither goeth this man?" And after he had heard the matter, should say, "Let me answer for him, I will become surety for him. Yea, I will pay all for him."

Such a part our Saviour Christ acted for us. If he had not suffered this, I for my part should have suffered, according to the gravity and quantity of my sins, damnation. For the greater the sin is, the greater is the punishment in hell. He suffered for you and me, in such a degree as is due to all the sins of the whole world. It was as if you would imagine, that one man had committed all the sins since Adam: you may be sure he should be punished with the same horror of death, in such a sort as all men in the world should have suffered.

Suppose, and put the case that our Saviour Christ had committed all the sins of the world: all that I for my part have done, all that you for your part have done, and that any man else hath done; if he had done all this himself, his agony that he suffered should have been no greater nor more grievous than it was. This that he suffered in the garden, was a portion I say of his passion, and one of the bitterest parts of it. And this he suffered for our sins, and not for any sins he himself committed; for we all should have suffered, every man according to his own deserts.

This he did of his goodness, partly to purge and cleanse our sins, partly because he would taste and feel our miseries, "That he should the rather help and relieve us;" and partly he suffered to give us an example to behave ourselves as he did. He did not suffer, to discharge us wholly from death, to keep us quite from it, not to taste of it. Nay, nay, you must not take it so. We shall have the beholding of this uglisome face every one of us, we shall feel it ourselves.

Yet our Saviour Christ did suffer, to signify to us, that death may be overcome. We shall indeed overcome it, if we repent, and acknowledge that our Saviour Jesus Christ pacified with his pangs and pains the wrath of the Father;

* The prison for debtors.

if we have a love to walk in the ways of God; if we believe in Jesus Christ, we shall overcome death: I say it shall not prevail against us.

Wherefore, whensoever it happeneth to thee, my friend, to have the tasting of this death,—that thou shalt be tempted with this horror of death,—what is to be done then?—Whensoever thou feelest thy soul heavy to death, make haste and resort to this garden: and with this faith thou shalt overcome this terror when it cometh.

Oh, it was a grievous thing that Christ suffered here. Oh, the greatness of this dolor that he suffered in the garden, partly to make amends for our sins, and partly to deliver us from death; not so that we should not die bodily, but so that this death should be the way to a better life, and to destroy and overcome hell. Our Saviour Christ had a garden, but he had little pleasure in it. You have many goodly gardens, I would that in the midst of them you would consider what agony our Saviour Christ suffered in his garden. That were a goodly meditation to have in your gardens! It should occasion you to delight no further in vanities, but to remember what he suffered for you. It may draw you from sin: it is a good monument, a good sign, a good admonition, to consider how he behaved himself in this garden.

Well; he saith to his disciples, "Sit here and pray with me." He went a little way off, as it were a stone's cast from them, and prayed, and said, "Father, if it be possible, away with this bitter cup, this outrageous pain." Yet afterwards he corrects himself, and says, "Not my will, but thy will be done, O Father." Here is a good meditation for Christian men, at all times, and not only upon Good Friday: let Good Friday be every day to a Christian man, to know to use his passion to that end and purpose; not only to read the story, but to take the fruit of it.

Some men, if they had been in this agony, would have run themselves through with their swords, as Saul did: some would have hanged themselves, as Ahithophel did. Let us not follow these men, they are no examples for us; but let us follow Christ, who in his agony resorted to his Father with his prayer: this must be our pattern to work by.

Here I might dilate the matter as concerning praying to saints. Here we may learn not to pray to saints. Christ bids us, "Pray to thy Father that is in heaven," to the

Creator, and not to any creature. And therefore away with these avowries: let God alone be our avowry;* what have we to do to run hither or thither, but only to the Father of heaven? I will not tarry to speak of this matter.

Our Saviour Christ set his disciples an order, and commanded them to watch and pray, saying, "Watch and pray;"—Whereto should they watch and pray? He saith by and by, "that ye enter not into temptation." He bids them not pray that they should not be tempted; for that is as much as to say, to pray that we should be out of this world. There is no man in this world without temptation. In the time of prosperity, we are tempted to wantonness, pleasures, and all lightness; in the time of adversity, to despair of God's goodness. Temptation never ceases. There is a difference between being tempted, and entering into temptation. He bids them therefore not to pray that they be not tempted, but that they "enter not into temptation." To be tempted is no evil thing. For what is it? it is no more than when the flesh, the devil, and the world, solicit and move us against God.

To give place to these suggestions, and to yield ourselves, and suffer ourselves to be overcome by them, this is to enter into temptation. Our Saviour Christ knew that they should be grievously tempted, and therefore he gave them warning, that they should not give place to temptation, nor despair at his death: and if they forsook him, or ran away—in case they tripped or swerved, yet to come again.

But our Saviour Christ did not only command his disciples to pray, but fell down upon his knees flat upon the ground, and prayed himself, saying, "Father, deliver me from this pang and pain that I am in, this outrageous pain." This word, Father, came even from his inmost heart, when he made his moan; as who should say, "Father, rid me; I am in such pain that I can be in no greater! Thou art my Father, I am thy Son. Can the father forsake his son in such anguish?" Thus he made his moan, "Father, take away this horror of death from me, rid me of this pain, suffer me not to be taken when Judas comes, suffer me not to be hanged on the cross, suffer not my hands to be pierced with nails, nor my heart with the sharp spear." A wonderful thing, that he should so often tell his disciples

* A pleader or advocate.

of it before, and now, when he comes to the point, desire to be rid of it, as though he would have been disobedient to the will of his Father.

Before this he said that he came to suffer, and now he says, "Away with this cup." Who would have thought that ever this should have come out of Christ's mouth? What a case is this! What should a man say? You must understand, that Christ took upon him our infirmities, of which this was one, to be sorry at death. Among the stipends of sin, this was one, to tremble at the cross: this is a punishment for our sin.

It goeth otherwise with us than with Christ: if we were in like case, and in like agony, we should almost curse God, or rather wish that there were no God. This that he said was not of that sort, it was referring the matter to the will of his Father; but we seek by all means, be it right, be it wrong, of our own nature, to be rid of pain; he desired it conditionally, as it might stand with his Father's will, adding a "nevertheless" to it; so his request was to show the infirmity of man. Here is now an example what we should do when we are in like case. He never deserved it, we have. He had a "notwithstanding:" let us have so too, we must have a "nevertheless, thy will be done, and not mine." Give me grace to be content to submit my will unto thine. His deeds teach us what to do. This is our surgery, our physic, when we are in agony; and reckon upon it, friends, that we shall come to it, we shall feel it at one time or another.

What does he now? what came to pass when he had heard no voice? He resorts to his friends, seeking some comfort at their hands, seeing he had none at his Father's hand; he comes to his disciples, and finds them asleep! he spake unto Peter, and said, "Ah, Peter, art thou asleep?" Peter before had bragged stoutly, as though he would have killed Christ's enemies, and now, when he should have comforted Christ, he was asleep; not a word! He was fain to say to his disciples, "Watch and pray; the spirit is ready, but the flesh is weak;" he had never a word from them again. They might at the least have said, "O Sir, remember yourself; are you not Christ? came not you into this world, to redeem sin? Be of good cheer, be of good comfort; this sorrow will not help you, comfort yourself by your own preaching: you have said, 'It behoves the Son of Man to suffer.' You have not

deserved anything, it is not your fault." Indeed if they had done this, they had played a friendly part; but they gave him not so much as one comfortable word. We run to our friends in our distresses and agonies, as though we had all our trust and confidence in them. He did not so; he resorted to them, but trusted not in them: we run to our friends, and come no more to God; he returned again. What! shall we not resort to our friends in time of need? and think ye, we shall not find them asleep? Yes, I warrant you; and when we need their help most, we shall not have it. But what shall we do, when we shall find lack in them? We cry out upon them, upbraid them, chide, brawl, fume, chafe, and backbite them. But Christ did not so; he excused his friends, "Oh," said he, "watch and pray: I see the spirit is ready, but the flesh is weak." What means this? surely it is a comforting Scripture. For as long as we live in this world, when we are at the best, we have but the readiness of the spirit with the infirmity of the flesh. The very saints of God said, "My will is good, but I am not able to perform it." I have been with some, and fain they would, fain they would—there was readiness of spirit, but it would not be; it grieved them that they could not take things as they should do. The flesh resists the work of the Holy Ghost in our hearts, and hinders it. We have to pray ever to God. Oh prayer, prayer! oh, that it might be used in this realm, as it ought to be by all men, and especially by magistrates, by counsellors, by great rulers; to pray, to pray that it would please God to put godly policies* in their hearts.—Call for assistance.

I have heard say, that when the good queen† who is gone, had ordained in her house daily prayer, both before noon, and after noon, the admiral got out of the way, like a mole digging in the earth. He shall be Lot's wife to me as long as I live. He was, I heard say, a covetous man, a covetous man indeed: I would there were no more in England. He was, I heard say, an ambitious man, I would there were no more in England. He was, I heard say, a seditious man, a contemner of common prayer, I would there were no more in England. Well, he is gone. I would he had left none behind him. Remember you, my lords, that you pray in your houses for the better

* Public designs.

† Catharine Parr, who married the lord admiral Seymour.

mortification of your flesh. Remember, God must be honoured; I urge you to pray, that God will continue his Spirit in you. I do not put you in comfort, that if ye have once the Spirit, ye cannot lose it. There are new spirits started up of late, that say, after we have received the Spirit, we cannot sin. I will make but one argument: Saint Paul had brought the Galatians to the profession of the faith, and left them in that state; they had received the Spirit once, but they sinned again, as he testified of them himself: he saith, "Ye did run well," ye were once in a right state; and again, "Received ye the Spirit from the works of the law, or by the righteousness of faith?" Once they had the Spirit by faith, but false prophets came, (when he was gone from them,) and they plucked them clean away from all that Paul had planted them in; and then said Paul unto them, "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?" If this is true, we may lose the Spirit that we have once possessed. I will not tarry in it. But now to the passion again.

Christ had been with his Father, and felt no help: he had been with his friends, and had no comfort: he had prayed twice, and was not heard; what did he now? Did he give over prayer? No, he goeth again to his Father, and saith the same again; "Father, if it be possible, away with this cup." Here is an example for us, although we are not heard at the first time, shall we give over our prayer? Nay, we must go to it again, we must be instant in prayer. He prayed thrice, and was not heard; let us pray threescore times: folks are very dull now-a-days in prayer, or to come to sermons, or to resort to common prayer. You housekeepers, and especially great men, give an example of prayer in your houses.

Well; did his Father look upon him this second time? No, he went to his friends again, thinking to find some comfort there, but he finds them asleep again, more deep asleep than ever they were; their eyes were heavy with sleep; there was no comfort at all, they wist not what to say to him. A wonderful thing, how he was tossed, one while to his Father, and was destitute at his hand; another while to his friends, and found no comfort at them!

Almighty God beheld this battle, that he might enjoy the honour and glory; "that in his name all knees should bow, in heaven, earth, and hell." That the Father would not hear his own Son, was another punishment due to our sins. When we cry unto him, he will not hear us. The

prophet Jeremiah saith, "They shall cry unto me, and I will not hear them." These are Jeremiah's words; here he threatens to punish sin, with not hearing their prayers. The prophet saith, "They have not had the fear of God before their eyes, nor have they regarded discipline and correction." I never saw so little discipline as is now-a-days: men will all be masters, they will be masters and not disciples.

Alas! where is this discipline now in England? The people regard no discipline; they are without order Where they should give place, they will not stir one inch: yea, where magistrates should determine matters, they will break into the place before they come, and at their coming not move a whit for them. Is this discipline? Is this good order? If a man say anything unto them, they regard it not. They that are called to answer, will not answer directly, but scoff the matter out. Men, the more they know, the worse they are; it is truly said, "Knowledge makes us proud, and causes us to forget all, and set away discipline." Surely in popery they had a reverence, but now we have none at all. I never saw the like. This same lack of the fear of God and of discipline in us, was one of the causes that the Father would not hear his Son. This pain our Saviour Christ suffered for us, who never deserved it. Oh what it was that he suffered in this garden, till Judas came! The dolors, the terrors, the sorrows that he suffered are unspeakable. He suffered, partly, to make amends for our sins, and partly to give us example, what we should do in like case. What comes of this in the end? Well, now he prays again, he resorts to his Father again. He was in sorer pains, in more anguish than ever he was; and therefore he prays longer, more ardently, more fervently, more vehemently, than ever he did before. Oh, what a wonderful thing is this! this horror of death is worse than death itself, and is more terrible. He prays now the third time. He did it so instantly, so fervently, that it brought out a bloody sweat, and in such plenty, that it dropped down even to the ground. There issued out of his precious body drops of blood. What pain was he in, when these bloody drops fell so abundantly from him! Yet for all that, how unthankful do we show ourselves toward him that died, only for our sakes, and for the remedy of our sins! Oh what blasphemy do we commit day by day; what little regard have we to his blessed passion, thus to

swear by God's blood, by Christ's passion! We have nothing in our pastime, but "God's blood," "God's wounds." We continually blaspheme his passion, while hawking, hunting, dicing, and carding. Who would think he should have such enemies among those that profess his name?

What became of his blood that fell down, trow ye? was the blood of Hales* of it? woe worth it. What ado was there to bring this out of the king's head?† This great abomination, of the blood of Hales, could not be taken out of his mind for a great while.

You that are of the court, and especially, ye sworn chaplains, beware of a lesson that a great man taught me at my first coming to the court; he told it me for good-will; he thought it well. He said to me, "You must beware howsoever you do, that you contradict not the king; let him have his sayings, follow him, go with him." Marry, out upon this counsel! shall I say as he says? Say your conscience; or else what a worm shall you feel gnawing, what a remorse of conscience shall you have, when you remember how you have slacked your duty! It is a good wise saying, "The drop of rain maketh a hole in the stone, not by violence, but by oft falling." Likewise a prince must be turned, not violently, but he must be won by a little and a little. He must have his duty told him; but it must be done with humbleness, with request of pardon, or else it were a dangerous thing. Unpreaching prelates have been the cause, that the blood of Hales so long blinded the king. Woe worth that such an abominable thing should be in a Christian realm; but thanks be to God, it was partly redressed in the king's days, that dead is, and much

* At Hales, in Gloucestershire, was a famous relic pretended to be the blood of our Saviour brought from Jerusalem. If any man was in mortal sin, and had not received absolution he could not see the precious deposit; which, otherwise, to any pious person, was visible enough. To prepare therefore, for a sight of the miracle, it was customary to confess to a priest, and make a suitable offering at the altar, before the relic was shown. The blood was kept in a crystal vessel, very thick on one side, but thin and transparent on the other. If a wealthy person appeared, the monks turned the thick side, where the eye could discern nothing; which was done to open his heart and his pocket; and when he had bought as many masses, or made as many offerings as they thought fit, they turned the thin side, and the blood became visible. William Thomas, clerk of the council to Edward VI., says that this blood was nothing more than that of a duck, renewed every week.—*Collier*, vol. ii. p. 149.

† King Henry VIII.

more now. God grant good-will and power to go forward, if there is any such abomination still behind, that it may be utterly rooted up.

O how happy are we, that it hath pleased Almighty God to vouchsafe that his Son should sweat blood for the redeeming of our sins! and again, how unhappy are we, if we will not take it thankfully, who were redeemed so painfully! Alas, what hard hearts have we! Our Saviour Christ never sinned, and yet he sweat blood for our sins. We will not once water our eyes with a few tears. What a horrible thing is sin; that no other thing would remedy and pay the ransom for it, but only the blood of our Saviour Christ! There was nothing to pacify the Father's wrath against man, but such an agony as he suffered: all the sufferings of all the martyrs that ever were, all the sacrifices of patriarchs that ever were, all the good works that ever were done, were not able to remedy our sin, to make satisfaction for our sins, nor anything, except this extreme passion and blood-shedding of our most merciful Saviour Christ.

But to draw toward an end, what became of this threefold prayer? At length it pleased God to hear his Son's prayer, and send him an angel to corroborate, to strengthen, to comfort him. Christ needed no angel's help, if he had listed to ease himself with his deity. He was the Son of God, what then? Forsomuch as he was man, he received comfort at the angel's hand; as it accords to our infirmity. His obedience, his continuance, and suffering, so pleased the Father of heaven, that for his Son's sake, be he ever so great a sinner, yet leaving his sin, and repenting for the same, he will owe him such favour, as though he had never committed any sin.

The Father of heaven will not suffer him to be tempted with this great horror of death and hell, to the uttermost, and above that which he is able to bear. Look for it, my friends, by him and through him, we shall be able to overcome it: let us do as our Saviour Christ did, and we shall have help from above, we shall have angels' help; if we trust in him, heaven and earth shall give up, rather than we shall lack help. He saith he is "a helper in time of need."

When the angel had comforted him, and when this horror of death was gone, he was so strong, that he offered himself to Judas; and said, "I am he." To make an

end. I pray you take pains, it is a day of penance, as we use to say, give me leave to make you weary this day. The Jews had him to Caiaphas and Annas, and there they whipped him, and beat him: they set a crown of sharp thorns upon his head, and nailed him to a tree. Yet all this was not so bitter, as the horror of death, and the agony that he suffered in the garden, in such a degree as is due to all the sins of the world, and not to one man's sins. Well, this passion is our remedy; it is the satisfaction for our sins. . . . . .

He descended into hell. . I see no inconvenience to say, that Christ suffered in soul in hell.* I singularly commend the exceeding great charity of Christ, who for our sakes would suffer in hell in his soul. It sets out the unspeakable hatred that God hath to sin. I perceive not that it derogates from the dignity of Christ's death; as in the garden, when he suffered, it derogates nothing from that which he suffered on the cross. Scripture speaks on this fashion; "He that believeth in me, hath life everlasting." Here he sets forth faith as the cause of our justification; in other places, as high commendation is given to works; and yet, are the works any derogation from that dignity of faith? No. And again, Scripture saith, "Christ died for our sins, and rose again for our justification." It attributeth here our justification to his resurrection; and doth this derogate any thing from his death? Not a whit. It is whole Christ. What with his nativity, what with his circumcision, what with his incarnation and the whole process of his life; what with his preaching, what with his ascending, descending, what with his death, it is all Christ that worketh our salvation. He sitteth on the right hand of the Father, and all for us. All this is the work of our salvation. I would be as loath to derogate any thing from Christ's death, as the best of you all. How inestimably are we bound to him! What thanks ought we to give him for it! We must have this continually in remembrance, "For thee we are in dying continually."

The life of a Christian man is nothing but a readiness to die, and a remembrance of death. If what I have spoken of Christ's suffering in the garden, and in hell, derogate any thing from Christ's death and passion, away

* Latimer here affixes a different sense to the words "He descended into hell" from that which they have generally been considered to bear.

with it, believe me not in this; if it do not, it commends and sets forth very well unto us the perfection of the satisfaction that Christ made for us, and the work of redemption, not only before witness in this world, but in hell, in that terrible place; where, whether he suffered, or wrestled with the spirits, or comforted Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, I will not desire to know. If you like not that which I have spoken of his sufferings, let it go, I will not strive in it; I will be a prejudice to nobody, weigh it as ye list; I do but offer it you to consider. It is likely his soul did somewhat the three days that his body lay in the grave. To say, he suffered in hell for us, derogates nothing from his death. For all things that Christ did before his suffering on the cross, and after, work our salvation. If he had not been incarnate, he had not died; he was beneficial to us with all things he did. Christian people should have his suffering for them in remembrance. Let your gardens admonish you, your pleasant gardens, what Christ suffered for you in the garden; and what benefit you have by his suffering. It is his will you should so do; he would be had in remembrance.

Mix your pleasures with the remembrance of his bitter passion. The whole passion is satisfaction for our sins; and not the bare death, considering it so nakedly by itself. The manner of speaking of Scripture, is to be considered. It attributes our salvation now to one thing, now to another that Christ did: whereas indeed it pertained to all. Our Saviour Christ has left behind him a remembrance of his passion, the blessed communion, the celebration of the Lord's Supper; alas! it hath been long abused, as the sacrifices were before in the old law. The patriarchs used sacrifice, in the faith of the seed of the woman, which should break the serpent's head. The patriarchs sacrificed in hope, and afterward the work was esteemed. There came others after, and they considered not the faith of Abraham and the patriarchs, but did their sacrifice according to their own imagination; even so it came to pass with our blessed communion. In the primitive church, in places when their friends were dead, they used to come together to the holy communion. What? to remedy them that were dead? No, not a straw; it was instituted for no such purpose. But then they would call to remembrance God's goodness, and his passion that he suffered for us, wherein they comforted much their faith.

Others came afterwards, and set up all these kinds of massings, all these kinds of iniquity. What an abomination is it! the foulest that ever was, to attribute to man's work our salvation! God be thanked that we have this blessed communion set forth so now, that we may comfort, increase, and fortify our faith at that blessed celebration. If he is guilty of the body of Christ, that takes it unworthily; he finds great comfort at it, that eats it worthily: he eats it worthily, that eats it in faith. In faith? in what faith? Not long ago a great man said openly, "They babble much of faith, I will go on with my licentiousness, and have as good a faith as the best of them all." I think he never knew other than the whoremonger's faith. It is no such faith that will serve. It is no bribing judges or justices' faith, no rent-raiser's faith, no whoremonger's faith, no lease-monger's faith, nor the seller of benefices' faith; but the faith in the passion of our Saviour Christ. We must believe that our Saviour Christ hath taken us again to his favour, that he hath delivered us his own body and blood, to plead against the devil, and by merit of his own passion, of his own mere liberality. This is the faith, I tell you, that we must come to the communion with, and not the whoremonger's faith. Look where remission of sin is, there is acknowledging of sin also. Faith is a noble duchess, she ever hath her gentleman-usher going before her, the confessing of sins; she hath a train after her, the fruits of good works, the walking in the commandments of God. He that believeth will not be idle, he will walk, he will do his business. Have ever the gentleman-usher with you. So if you will try faith, remember this rule, consider whether the train is waiting upon her. If you have another faith than this, a whoremonger's faith, you are like to go to the bottomless pit, and there you shall have weeping and gnashing of teeth; much good do it you—you see your fare. If you will believe and acknowledge your sins, you shall come to the blessed communion of the bitter passion of Christ worthily, and so attain to everlasting life; to the which may the Father of heaven bring you and me. *Amen.*

ON COVETOUSNESS,

BEING

His last Sermon preached before King Edward, A. D. 1550.

LUKE xii.

Take heed and beware of covetousness.

TAKE heed and beware of covetousness:—take heed and beware of covetousness:—take heed and beware of covetousness. And what and if I should say nothing else, these three or four hours (for I know it will be so long, in case I am not commanded to the contrary) but these words, "Take heed and beware of covetousness." It would be thought a strange sermon before a king, to say nothing else but *Cavete ab avaritia*, "Beware of covetousness." And yet as strange as it is, it would be like the sermon of Jonas, that he preached to the Ninevites; as to the shortness and fewness of the words. For his sermon was, "There is yet forty days to come, and Nineveh shall be destroyed." Thus he walked from street to street, and from place to place round about the city, and said nothing else; but "There is yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed." There is no great odds nor difference, at least in the number of words, nor yet in the sense or meaning between these two sermons; "There is yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed;" and these words which I have taken to speak of this day: "Take heed, and beware of covetousness." For Nineveh shall be destroyed for sin, and of their sins covetousness was one, and one of the greatest; so that it is all one in effect. And as they are alike concerning the shortness, the paucity of words, the brevity of words, and also the meaning and purpose; so I would

they might be alike in fruit and profit. For what came of Jonas's sermon? what was the fruit of it? "At the preaching of Jonas they believed God." Here was a great fruit, a great effect wrought. They believed God. They believed God's preacher, God's officer, God's minister, Jonas, and were converted from their sin. They believed that, as the preacher said, if they did not repent and amend their life, the city should be destroyed within forty days. This was a great fruit! for Jonas was but one man, and he preached but one sermon, and it was but a short sermon, as to the number of words: and yet he turned the whole city, great and small, rich and poor, king and all.

We are many preachers here in England, and we preach many long sermons, yet the people will not repent nor convert. This was the fruit, the effect, and the good that his sermon did, that all the whole city at his preaching converted, and amended their evil living, and did penance in sackcloth. And yet in this sermon of Jonas is no great curiousness, no great clerkliness,* no great affectation of words, nor painted eloquence; it was none other but, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be destroyed:" it was no more. This was no great curious sermon, but it was a nipping sermon, a pinching sermon, a biting sermon; it had a full bite, it was a nipping sermon, a rough sermon, and a sharp biting sermon. Do you not here marvel that these Ninevites cast not Jonas in prison, that they did not revile him, and rebuke him? They did not revile him, nor rebuke him; but God gave them grace to hear him, and to convert and amend at his preaching. A strange matter, for so noble a city to give place to one man's sermon! Now England cannot abide this, they cannot be content to hear God's minister, and his threatening for their sin, though the sermon be ever so good, though it be ever so true. It is, "a naughty fellow, a seditious fellow, he maketh trouble and rebellion in the realm; he lacketh discretion." But the Ninevites rebuked not Jonas that he lacked discretion, or that he spake out of time—that his sermon was made out of season: but in England, if God's preacher, God's minister, is any thing quick, or do speak sharply, then he is a foolish fellow, he is rash, he lacketh discretion. Now-a-days if they cannot reprove the doctrine that is preached, then they will reprove the preacher, that he lacketh due

* Learning.

consideration of the times, or that he is of learning sufficient, but he wanteth discretion.

They say, "What a time is this picked out to preach such things! he should have a respect and a regard to the time, and to the state of things, and of the commonweal." It rejoices me sometimes, when my friend comes and tells me that they find fault with my discretion, for by likelihood, think I, the doctrine is true; for if they could find fault with the doctrine, they would not charge me with the lack of discretion, but they would charge me with my doctrine, and not with the lack of discretion, or with the inconvenience of the time.

I will now ask you a question—I pray you, when should Jonas have preached against the covetousness of Nineveh, if the covetous men should have appointed him his time? I know that preachers ought to have a discretion in their preaching, and that they ought to have a consideration and respect to the place, and the time that they preach in; as I myself will say here what I would not say in the country. But what then? Sin must be rebuked, sin must be plainly spoken against. And when should Jonas have preached against Nineveh, if he should have forborne for the respect of the times, or the place, or the state of things there? For what was Nineveh? A noble, a rich, and a wealthy city. What is London to Nineveh? Like a village, as Islington, or such another, in comparison of London.* Such a city was Nineveh, it was three days' journey to go through every street of it, and to go but from street to street. There were noblemen, rich men, wealthy men, there were vicious men, and covetous men, and men that gave themselves to all voluptuous living, and to worldliness of getting riches. Was this a time well chosen and discreetly taken of Jonas, to come and reprove them of their sin, to declare unto them the threatenings of God, and to tell them of their covetousness, and to say plainly unto them, that except they repented and amended their evil living, they and their city should be destroyed by God's hand within forty days? And yet they heard Jonas and gave place to his preaching. They heard the threatenings of God, and feared his stroke and vengeance, and believed God, that is, they believed God's preacher and minister; they believed that God would be true to his word that he

* At that time London was not half its present extent.

spake by the mouth of his prophet, and thereupon did penance, to turn away the wrath of God from them. Well, what shall we say? I will say this and not spare; Christ saith, Nineveh shall rise against the Jews at the last day, and bear witness against them; because that hearing God's threatening for sin, "They did penance at the preaching of Jonas in ashes and sackcloth," as the text saith there; and I say Nineveh shall arise against England—thou, England—Nineveh shall arise against England, because they will not believe God, nor hear his preachers that cry daily unto them, nor amend their lives, and especially their covetousness. Covetousness is as great a sin now as it was then; and it is the same sin now as it was then. And God will as surely strike for sin now, as he did then. But ah, good was God, that would give them a time of repentance, after his threatening. First, to see whether they would amend or not, or he would destroy them. For even from the beginning of the world they fell to sin. The first age from Adam, which was about two thousand years, they ever fell to sin, yet they had preachers, Noah and Enoch, and other holy fathers. And in that time a great multiplication grew in two thousand years; for the Scripture saith, "The sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and they took them wives from among all that they had chosen." This would be a long matter to speak of. But what means this, the sons of God saw the daughters of men? who were these sons of God?

The sons of God were those that came of the good men, of the good preachers, of the holy fathers that were God's men; they that came of Seth and Enoch, who were good men, and of others. For our grandmother Eve, when Cain had killed Abel, and when she had another son by Adam, who was called Seth, she gave thanks to God for him, and acknowledged that it was God who had given him unto her; for she said, "God hath given me another seed instead of Abel whom Cain slew."

Here is a long matter to talk on. Some will say, was this a natural mother? was this naturally done, to publish the sin of her own son? What needed she to speak of that matter, or to make any rehearsal of that matter, to open the sin of her son? What needed she to do this? Yes, she was now a good woman: when she believed the serpent, she was not good. But now she had repented that deed, and had taken hold of the promise of God, that there should

come of her a seed, that should tread down and destroy the head of the serpent. She had now taken hold of this promise, and was a good woman, and a godly woman; she opened the fault of her son, and hid it not. Here could I say somewhat to them, if I would, that spake so much against me for my preaching here the last year. But to return to Eve, and to declare that by "the sons of God" are to be understood those who came of good men, as of Seth and Enoch.

And "the daughters of men" are to be understood as speaking of them that came of Cain and of his seed; and therefore our grandmother Eve bade beware of marrying with Cain's seed, for fear of falling from God to wickedness thereby.

And here I would say a thing to your Majesty. I shall speak it of good will to your Highness; I would I were able to do your grace good service in any thing, you should be sure to have it. But I will say this—for God's love beware where you marry; choose your wife in a faithful stock. Beware of worldly policy, marry in God; marry not for the respect of great alliance, for thereof cometh all these evils of breaking of wedlock, which are among princes and noblemen. And here I would be a suitor unto your Majesty, for I come now rather to be a suitor and a petitioner, than a preacher; for I come now to take my leave, and to take my last farewell, at least in this place; for I have not long to live, so that I think I shall never come here into this place again; and therefore I will ask a petition of your Highness. For the love of God, take an order* for marriages here in England. For here is marriage for pleasure and voluptuousness, and for goods; and so that they may join land to land, and possessions to possessions, they care for no more here in England. And that is the cause of so much adultery, and so much breach of wedlock in the noblemen and gentlemen, and so much divorcing. And it is not now in the noblemen only, but it is come now to the inferior sort. Every man, if he have but a small cause, will cast off his old wife, and take a new, and will marry again at his pleasure; and there are many that have so done. I would therefore wish that there were a law provided in this behalf for adulterers, and that adultery should be punished with death; and that might be a remedy for all this matter.

* Give directions respecting.

There would not then be so much adultery, fornication, and lechery in England as there is—for the love of God take heed to it, and see a remedy provided for it. I would wish that adultery should be punished with death; and that the woman being an offender, if her husband would be a suitor for her, she should be pardonded for the first time, but not for the second time: and the man being an offender, should be pardoned if his wife be a suitor for him the first time, but not for the second time, if he offended twice.

If this law were made, there would not be so much adultery nor lechery used in the realm as there is. Well, I trust once yet, as old as I am, to see the day that lechery shall be punished: it was never more need, for there was never more used in England than there is at this day. It is made but a laughing matter, and a trifle; but it is a sad matter, and an earnest matter; for it is a great sin: Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed for it. And it was one of the sins reigning in Nineveh, for which it should have been destroyed. But think you that lechery was alone? No, no, covetousness was joined with it. Covetousness follows it, and commonly they go together. For why? They that are given to voluptuousness, and to the vice of lechery, must have wherewith to maintain it, and that must be gotten by covetousness. For at the first when men fell to sin, it was chiefly to this; wherefore the world should be destroyed; the book saith, "There were giants in the earth in those days: and after that the sons of God had come to the daughters of men, and there had engendered with them, the same became mighty men of the world, and men of renown," &c. This is covetousness; for the book saith, "The earth was replete with iniquity, for they oppressed the poor." They made them slaves, peasants, villains,* and bondmen unto them. These were giants, so called from the property† of giants, for they oppress the weak, and take from them what they list by force, violence, and oppression. They were giants, or of the property of giants, not that they were greater men of stature and strength of body than other men were. For certain writers, speaking of this matter, say, that they were giants for their cruelty and covetous oppression, and not

* Labourers who were not allowed to remove from the place where they lived.

† Usual conduct.

in stature or procerity* of body. And this was covetousness, wherewith God was so displeased, that he repented that he had made men, and resolved utterly to destroy the world; and so called to Noah, and told him of it. "And I will not dispute the matter with them, saith God, from day to day; but if they will not amend within a hundred and twenty years, I shall bring in a universal flood, and destroy them all." This was preached by Noah to them; so that God of his goodness, patience, and long-sufferance, gave them a time to repent and amend after his threatenings, because they should see their evil doings, and return to God. So they had a hundred and twenty years to repent. This Noah was laughed to scorn; they, like fools, laughed this godly father to scorn.

Well, you think little of the history; if you will know the meaning of it, it is a great proof what anger God hath to sin. But how long time hast thou, England—thou England? I cannot tell, for God has not revealed it unto me; if he had, I would tell you of it, I would not be afraid, nor spare to tell it you, for the good will I bear you; but I cannot tell how long time you have, for God hath not opened it unto me. But I can tell you, that this lenity, this long-forbearing and holding of his hand, calls upon us to repent and amend. And I can tell, that whosoever contemneth this riches and treasure of God's goodness, of his mercy, his patience and long-suffering, shall have the more grievous condemnation. This I can tell well enough; Paul tells me this; and I can tell that you have time to repent as long as you live here in this world, but after this life, I can make no warrant of any further time to repent. Therefore repent and amend while you are here; for when you are gone hence, you are past that. But how long that shall be, whether to-morrow or the next day, or twenty years, or how long, I cannot tell. But in the mean time you have many a Jonas to tell you of your faults, and to declare unto you God's threatenings, except you repent and amend.

Therefore, to return to my matter, I say as I said at the beginning, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness," see it, first see it, and then amend it. For I promise you there is great complaint of it, and much crying out, and much preaching, but no amendment that I see: but "Beware of covetousness." And why of covetousness? "For covet-

* Tallness or superiority.

ousness is the root of all evil, and of all mischief." This saying of Paul took me away from the gospel that is read in the church this day, and it took me from the epistle, that I could preach upon neither of them at this time. But to tell you my imperfection—when I was appointed to preach here, I was newly come out of a sickness, whereof I looked to have died, and weak I was. Yet, nevertheless, when I was appointed unto it, I took it upon me, howbeit I repented afterwards that I had so done. I was displeased with myself; I was testy, as Jonas was when he should go to preach to the Ninevites. Well, I looked on the gospel that is read this day, but it liked me not; I looked on the epistle, I could not away with that neither. And yet I remember I had preached upon this epistle once before king Henry the Eighth; but now I could not frame it, it liked me not in any manner. Well, this saying of Paul came in my mind, and at last I considered and weighed the matter deeply, and then thought I thus with myself; Is covetousness the root of all mischief and of all evil? then have at the root, and down with all covetousness. So this place of Paul brought me to this text of Luke, "See and beware of covetousness." Therefore, you preachers, out with your swords and strike at the root; speak against covetousness, and cry out upon it. Stand not ticking* and toying at the branches, nor at the boughs, for then there will new boughs and branches spring again; but strike at the root, and fear not these giants of England, these great men and men of power, these men that are oppressors of the poor; fear them not, but strike at the root of all evil, which is mischievous covetousness. For covetousness is the cause of rebellion. I have forgotten my logic, but yet I can jumble at a syllogism, and make an argument of it to prove it by. Covetousness is the root of all evil: rebellion is an evil, *ergo* covetousness is the root of rebellion. And so it was indeed. Covetousness was the cause of rebellion this last summer, and both parties had covetousness, as well the gentlemen as the commons. Both parties had covetousness, for both parties had an inordinate desire to have that which they had not, and that is covetousness, an inordinate desire to have what one hath not.†

* Trifling.

† In the summer of 1549, there was a very serious insurrection in many parts of England, but chiefly in Norfolk and Devonshire, occasioned by the conduct of the nobility and gentry, who, being wil-

The commons would have had from the gentlemen such things as they desired. The gentlemen would none of it, and so there was covetousness on both sides. The commons thought they had a right to the things that they inordinately sought to have. But what then? they must not come to it that way. Now, on the other side, the gentlemen had a desire to keep what they had, and so they rebelled too against the king's commandment, and against such good order as he and his council would have set in the realm. And thus both parties had covetousness, and both parties rebelled. I heard say, that there were godly ordinances devised for the redress of it. But the giants would none of it. I remember mine ownself, a certain giant, a great man, who sat in commission about such matters; and when the townsmen should bring in* what had been enclosed, he frowned and chafed, and so looked and threatened the poor men, that they durst not ask for their right.

I read of late in an act of parliament: and this act made mention of an act that was in king Henry's days, the third, I think, it was; yea, and such another business there was in king Edward the Second's time also. In this parliament that I speak of, the gentlemen and the commons were at variance, as they were of late. And there the gentlemen that were landlords, would needs have away much lands from their tenants; and would needs have an act of parliament, that it might be lawful for them to enclose and separate from their tenants, and from the commons, such portions of their lands as they thought good. Much ado there was about this act; at last it was concluded and granted that they might so do; provided alway, that they should leave SUFFICIENT to the tenant. Well, it was well that they

ling to make the most of the abbey lands, enclosed a great deal of the waste ground. This, though a real improvement of the country, produced loud complaints chiefly among the poor, who lost the benefit of pasturage. To quiet the public mind, commissioners were despatched into the country to examine the grievances; with instructions to throw open the enclosures and put things in their former state. These orders, however, were not faithfully executed, and the consequence was, that the disaffection increased till it broke out into open rebellion. The Cornish and Devonshire rebels laid siege to Exeter, but were at last defeated and dispersed. The Norfolk rebels, headed by Ket, a farmer, made themselves masters of Norwich, and began to dictate terms to the government, till the earl of Warwick gave them battle, routed them, and executed Ket, with his principal adherents.—*Stowe's Annals. Holinshed's Chronicles.*

* Report.

should leave sufficient for them. But who should be the judge to limit what was sufficient for them? Or who shall now judge what is sufficient? Well, I for my part cannot tell what is sufficient. But methought it was well that the tenants and poor commons should have sufficient. For if they had sufficient thought I, they had cause to be quiet. And then fell I to make this argument within myself: if at that time it were put in their will and power that they might enclose, leaving to the tenant what was sufficient for him; if they had it then in their power, thought I, that they might do this, they would leave no more than sufficient. If they left to the tenants and poor commons no more in those days than sufficient; then if they had any more taken from them since that time, they now would not have sufficient.

They in Christ are equal with you. Peers of the realm there must needs be. The poorest ploughman is in Christ equal with the greatest prince that is. Let them therefore have sufficient to maintain them, and to find them their necessaries. A ploughland must have sheep, yea, they must have sheep to manure their ground for bearing of corn; for if they have no sheep to help to fatten the ground, they shall have but bare corn and thin. They must have swine for their food, to make their veneries* or bacon of; their bacon is their venison (for they shall now have *hangum tuum*, if they get any other venison†) so that bacon is their necessary meat to feed on, which they may not lack. They must have other cattle, as horses to draw their plough, and for carriage of things to the markets, and kine for their milk and cheese, which they must live upon and pay their rents with.

These cattle must have pasture, which pasture if they lack, the rest must needs fail them. And pasture they cannot have if the land is taken in, and enclosed from them. So, as I said, there was on both parts rebellion. Therefore, for God's love, restore their 'sufficient' unto them, and search no more what is the cause of rebellion. But see and "beware of covetousness," for covetousness is the cause of rebellion. Well now, if covetousness is the cause of rebellion, then preaching against covetousness is not the cause of rebellion. Some say, that the preaching now-a-days is the cause of all sedition and rebellion; for since this new

* Venison or game. † It was felony to steal deer.

preaching has come in here, there has been much sedition; and therefore it must needs be that the preaching is the cause of rebellion here in England. Forsooth, our preaching is the cause of rebellion, much like as Christ was the cause of the destruction of Jerusalem. For, saith Christ, "If I had not come and spoken to them they should have no sin." So we preachers have come and spoken to you, we have drawn our swords of God's word, and stricken at the roots of all evils to have them cut down; and if you will not amend what can we do more? And preaching is the cause of sedition here in England, much like as Elias was the cause of trouble in Israel, for he was a preacher there, and told the people of all degrees their faults, and so they winced and kicked at him, and accused him to Ahab the king, that he was a seditious fellow, and a troublous preacher, and made much uproar in the realm. So the king sent for him, and he was brought to Ahab the king, who said unto him, "Art thou he that troubleth all Israel?" And Elias answered, and said, "Nay, thou and thy father's house are they that trouble all Israel." Elias had preached God's word; he had plainly told the people of their evil doings; he had showed them God's threatenings; (in God's behalf I speak, there is neither king nor emperor, be they in ever so great an estate, but they are subject to God's word,) and therefore he was not afraid to say to Ahab: "It is thou and thy father's house, that causeth all the trouble in Israel." Was not this presumptuously spoken to a king? Was not this a seditious fellow? Was not this fellow's preaching a cause of all the trouble in Israel? Was he not worthy to be cast into Bocardo or Little Ease?* No, but he had used God's sword, which is his word, and had done nothing else that was evil; but they could not abide it. He never disobeyed Ahab's sword, which was the regal power. But Ahab disobeyed his sword, which was the word of God. And therefore by the punishment of God, much trouble arose in the realm for the sins of Ahab and the people. But God's preacher, God's prophet, was not the cause of the trouble.

Then it is not we preachers that trouble England. But here is now an argument to prove the matter against the preachers. Here was preaching against covetousness all the last year in Lent, and the next summer followed rebel-

* Two prisons where the opposers of popery were often confined.

lion; *ergo*, preaching against covetousness was the cause of the rebellion! A goodly argument!

Here now I remember an argument of Master More's* which he bringeth in a book that he made against Bilney: and here by the way I will tell you a pleasant tale. Master More was once sent in commission into Kent, to find out if it might be, what was the cause of Goodwin Sands, and the shelf that stopped up Sandwich haven. Thither came Master More, and called the country before him, such as were thought to be men of experience, and men that could most likely best certify him concerning the stopping of Sandwich haven. Among others came before him an old man, with a white head, one that was thought to be little less than a hundred years old. When Master More saw this aged man, he thought it expedient to hear him say his mind in this matter; for, being so old a man, it was likely that he knew most of any man in that company. So Master More called this old aged man unto him, and said, "Father, tell me, if you can, what is the cause of this great rising of the sands and shelves here about this haven, which stop it up so that no ships can arrive here? You are the oldest man that I can espy in all this company, so that if any man can tell any cause of it, you it is likely can say most in it, or at least more than any other man here assembled." "Yea, forsooth, good master," quoth this old man, "for I am well nigh a hundred years old, and no man here in this company is anything near unto mine age." "Well then," quoth Master More, "how say you in this matter? What think you are the causes of these shelves and flats that stop up Sandwich haven?" "Forsooth, sir," quoth he, "I am an old man; I think that Tenterton-steeple is the cause of Goodwin sands. For I am an old man, sir," quoth he, "and I may remember the building of Tenterton-steeple, and I may remember when there was no steeple at all there. And before that Tenterton-steeple was building, there was no speaking of any flats or sands that stopped the haven, and therefore I think that Tenterton-steeple is the cause of the destroying and decay of Sandwich haven." Thus this old man, and even

* Sir Thomas More was made lord-chancellor by king Henry VIII., in the year 1529; he resigned the seals in 1532, and was beheaded in the year 1535, because he would not take the oath for acknowledging the king to be the head of the English church, and for abolishing the supremacy of the pope.

so to my purpose is preaching of God's word the cause of rebellion, as Tenterton-steeple was the cause that Sandwich haven is decayed!

And is not this a gay matter, that such should be taken for great wise men, who will thus reason against the preacher of God's word? But here I would take an occasion, by the way of a digression, to speak somewhat to my sisters, the women, to do them some good too, because I would do all folks good if I could, before I take my last farewell, at least-wise here of this place, for I think I shall no more come here; for I think I have not long to live; so that I judge I take my leave now of the court for ever, and shall no more come into this place.

Ahab was a king, but Jezebel, Jezebel, she was the perilous woman. She would rule her husband the king: she would have to do in all things, and she would order matters as pleased her; and so will many women do, they will rule their husbands, and do all things after their own minds. They do therein against the order appointed them by God: they break the injunction that God gave unto them. Yea, it is now come to the lower sort, to mean men's wives, they will rule and apparel themselves gorgeously, and some of them far above their degrees, whether their husbands will or no. But they break their injunction, and do therein contrary to God's ordinance. God saith: "Thou shalt be subject under the power of thy husband." Thou shalt be subject; women are subjects; you are subjects to your husbands.

At the first, the man and the woman were equal. But after that she had given credit to the serpent, then she had an injunction set upon her: "Thou shalt be subject under the power of thy husband." And as for one part of her injunction she taketh; and she taketh one part of her penance, because she cannot avoid it, and that is, "Thou shalt bring forth children with pain and travail." . . But God hath provided herein. And as Christ saith in the gospel, "The woman when she beareth a child hath sorrow, but afterwards she remembereth not the pain, because there is a soul brought forth into the world."

But as it is a part of your penance, ye women, to travail in bearing your children; so it is a part of your penance to be subject unto your husbands; ye are underlings, underlings, and must be obedient. But this is now made a trifle and a small matter; and yet, it is a sad*

* Serious.

matter, a godly matter, a ghostly* matter, a matter of damnation and salvation. And Paul saith, that "a woman ought to have a power on her head." What is this, to have a power on her head? It is a manner of speaking of the Scripture; and to have her power on her head, is to have a sign and token of power, which is by covering of her head, declaring that she hath a superior above her, by whom she ought to be ruled and ordered: for she is not immediately under God, but mediately. For the husband is their head under God, and they are subjects under their husbands. But this power that some of them have, is disguised gear and strange fashions. . .

But there are now many Adams that will not displease their wives, but will in this behalf let them have all their own minds, and do as they list. And some others again there are now-a-days that will defend it, and say it may be suffered well enough, because it is not expressed in Scripture, nor spoken of by name. Though we have not express mention in Scripture against such laying of the hair in tussocks† and tufts, yet we have in Scripture express mention "of wreathen hair." But of these tussocks that are laid out now-a-days, there is no mention made in Scriptures, because they were not used in Scripture time. . .

But these defenders of it will not have it to be evil, because it is not spoken of in Scripture. But there are other things as evil as this, which are not spoken of in Scripture expressly, but they are implied in Scripture, as well as though they were expressly spoken of.

The prophet Isaiah saith, "Woe unto you that arise early in the morning, and go to drinking until night, that ye may swim in wine." This is the Scripture against banqueting and drunkenness. But now they banquet all night, and lie a-bed in the day time till noon, and the Scripture speaks nothing of that. But what then? the devil has his purpose this way, as well as the other; he has his purpose as well by revelling and keeping ill rule all night, as by rising early in the morning and banqueting all day. So the devil has his purpose both ways. Ye noblemen, ye great men, I wot not what rule ye keep; for God's sake hear the complaints and suits of the poor. Many complain against you that you lie a-bed till eight, or nine, or ten of the clock. I cannot tell what revel you

* Spiritual. † Braided locks of hair.

have over night, whether in banqueting, or dicing, or carding, or how it is; but in the morning, when poor suitors come to your houses, you cannot be spoken with: they are kept sometimes without your gates, or if they are let into the hall, or some outer chamber, out comes one or other, "Sir, you cannot speak with my lord yet, my lord is asleep, or he has had business of the king's all night," &c. And thus poor suitors are driven off from day to day, that they cannot speak with you in three, or four days, yea, a whole month: what shall I say more? yea, a whole year sometimes, ere they can come to your speech, to be heard by you. Look better to it, speak with poor men when they come to your houses, and despatch poor suitors, as indeed some noblemen do, and would that all noblemen would so do. But some do.

I went one day myself betimes in the morning to a great man's house to speak with him, on business that I had of my own. And methought I was up betimes; but when I came thither, the great man was gone forth about such affairs as behoved him, ere I came. Well, yet, thought I, this is well, I like this well: this man somewhat regards and considers his office and duty. I came too late for my own matter, and lost my journey, and my early rising too: and yet I was glad that I had been so beguiled. Follow this example, you great men, and arise early in the mornings, and be ready for men, to speak with them, and to despatch suitors that resort unto you. But all these I bring to disprove them that defend evil things because they are not expressly spoken against in the Scripture. But what matters that, when the devil has his purpose, and is served as well one way as another way? though it is not expressly spoken against in Scripture, yet I reckon it is plainly enough implied in the Scripture.

But now to come to my matter again: "See and beware of covetousness:" and I shall desire you to consider four things: Who speaketh it—what he speaketh—to whom he speaketh—and wherefore he speaketh it. As here, Christ speaks to a rich man against avarice: and why against avarice? what shall be the end of all covetous persons?—Eternal damnation. "For the covetous persons, saith Paul, shall not possess, nor enter into the kingdom of God." Here therefore I shall desire you to pray, &c.

ON COVETOUSNESS,

BEING

A second Sermon preached before King Edward in the afternoon of the same day.

LUKE xii.

See and beware of covetousness.

FIRST, who spake these words? Christ spake them; if I had spoken them of myself, it had been little worth. But Christ spoke them, and upon a good occasion: the story is, "There were two at strife between themselves," (Luke xii.) and by this it appears that Christ spoke to them well. Christ spoke these words at that time; and now he speaks them by his preacher, whom ye ought to believe; and so it is all one. But upon what occasion did he speak it? There were two brethren at strife together for lands, wealthy men, as it appears, and the rich fellow would not tarry till Christ had ended his sermon, but interrupted it, and would needs have his matter despatched at once. He was at Christ's sermon, but yet he would not defer his worldly cause till Christ had made an end of his godly exhortation. This was a thorny brother,* he was a gospeller, he was a carnal gospeller, as many are now-a-days for a piece of an abbey, or for a portion of chantrey lands, to get somewhat by it, and to serve his interest. He was a gospeller, one of the new brethren, somewhat worse than a rank papist. Howbeit, a rank papist now-a-days shall sooner have promotion than a true gospeller shall have, the more pity. But this was a thorny gospeller, he heard Christ's preaching and followed him for company, and heard his words; but he was never the better for it; the cares of the world so choked the word of God in him, that

* Mark iv. 18, 19.

he could not hear the sermon to the end, but interrupted the sermon for his worldly matter ere it were all done.

And what was Christ then doing? He was sowing good seed, but it fell upon stony ground, so that it could not take any root in this man, to bring forth good fruit in him. And let me tell you of the seed that Christ was then sowing; bear with me awhile, and seeing that I come now to take my last farewell of this place, hear me patiently, and give me leave a little while, and let me take my leave honestly.*

At the time when this fellow interrupted Christ's sermon, he was preaching a long sermon to his disciples, and to the people, being gathered together in a wonderful great multitude, as appears in the twelfth chapter of St. Luke's gospel: and there he first of all taught his disciples a good lesson, saying, "Beware in anywise of the leaven of the Pharisees." What is this leaven of the Pharisees? Leaven is sometimes taken for corrupt living, which infects others by the evil example thereof, and against such corrupt living, God's preacher must cry out earnestly, and never cease till it is rooted up. In the city of Corinth one had married his step-mother, his father's wife: and he was a jolly fellow, a great rich man, an alderman of the city, and therefore they winked at it, they would not meddle in the matter, they had nothing to do with it; and he was one of the head men, of such rule and authority, that they durst not, many of them.

But St. Paul hearing of the matter, wrote unto them, and in God's behalf charged them to do away such abomination from among them. St. Paul would not leave them till he had excommunicated the wicked doer of such abomination. If we should now excommunicate all such wicked doers, there would be much ado in England.

You that are magistrates show favour for affection to such, and will not suffer that they should be rooted out or put to shame. "Oh, he is such a man's servant, we may not do him any shame. Oh, he is a gentleman," &c. And so it is not now any thing looked unto. Lechery is used throughout England, and yet it is made a matter of sport, a matter of nothing, a laughing matter, and a trifle, not to be passed on, nor to be reformed.

But beware, you that are magistrates, their sin doth

* Fairly, properly.

leaven you all. Therefore for God's love beware of this leaven. Well, I trust it will be one day amended. I look not to live long, and yet I trust, as old as I am, to live so long as to see it punished. I would wish that Moses's law were restored. . . And here I will make a suit to your Highness to restore unto the church the discipline of Christ, in excommunicating such as are notable offenders; nor ever devise any other way. For no man is able to devise a better way than God hath done, which is excommunication, to put them from the congregation till they are confounded. Therefore restore Christ's discipline for excommunication; and that shall be a means to pacify God's wrath and indignation against us, and also that less abomination shall be used than in times past and at this day. I speak this of a conscience, and I mean and move it of good will to your grace and your realm.

Bring into the church of England open discipline of excommunication, that open sinners may be stricken withal. Sometimes leaven is taken for corrupt doctrine: and so it is here taken in this place, when he saith, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees." For Christ intended to make his disciples teachers of all the world, and therefore to beware of corrupt doctrine. And that which he said to them, he saith also to us; receive no corrupt doctrine, no mingle-mangle: yet there are leaveners yet still, and mingle-manglers that have soured Christ's doctrine with the leaven of the Pharisees. Yea, and where there is any piece of leaven, they will maintain that one piece, more than all the doctrine of Christ; and about that purpose they occupy and bestow all their wits. This was the first seed.

The second seed was, "There is nothing privy or hidden that shall not be revealed and opened:" it pertains all to one purpose; for there he taught his disciples to beware of the leaven, which was hypocrisy; declaring unto them, that hypocrisy would not always be hidden, but such as were not sincere should be known at the last day, and all that was taught should at length be known. It has also another meaning, for it is God's proverb: "There is nothing so privy but it shall be opened," at least in the great day of reckoning; in the dreadful day of general account, in the day of revelation; then shall it be openly known whatsoever is done, be it never so privily done.

These fellows that have their fetches, and their far com-

passes to bring things to their purposes, work they never so privily, never so covertly, yet at the last day, their doings shall be openly revealed, saith the prophet Isaiah, till all the world shall see it, to their shame and confusion that are the doers of it. As the prophet Jeremy saith, "Even as a thief that is taken with the manner* that he stealeth, so shall sinners be openly confounded, and their evil doings opened." Yea, and though it be not known in this world, yet it shall be known at the last day to their damnation. Indeed God hath verified his proverb from time to time, "Nothing is so privy which shall not be revealed."

When Cain had killed his brother Abel, he thought he had conveyed the matter so privily and so closely that it should never have been known nor have come to light; but, first, God knew it well enough, and called unto him, saying, "Cain, where is thy brother Abel?" He thought he could have beguiled God too; and therefore he answered, I cannot tell; "What," quoth Cain, "am I set to keep my brother? I cannot tell where he is." But at last he was confounded, and his murder brought to light; and now all the world reads it in the Bible. Joseph's brethren sold him away, they took his motley coat and besprinkled it over and over with blood, they thought all was sure, they had conveyed† the matter so secretly, that they thought all the world could never have espied it. And yet out it came to their great benefit. And now it is known to us all as many as can read the Bible. . . . .

And here I have another suit to your Highness. When you come to age, beware what persons you have about you: for if you are set on pleasure, or disposed to wantonness, you shall have ministers enough to be furtherers and instruments of it. But David, by his policy, thought so to have cloaked the matter of Bathsheba, that it should never have been known. He thought all the matter sure. But the prophet of God, Nathan, came and laid his fault plain before his face, and who is there now that knows it not? Elisha's servant, Gehazi, a bribing brother, he came colourably to Naaman the Syrian: he feigned a tale of his master Elisha, as all bribers will do, and told him that his master had need of this and that, and took of Naaman certain things, and bribed it away to his own benefit secretly; and thought that it should never have come out, but Elisha

* In the fact, with the article stolen. † Managed.

knew it well enough. The servant had his bribes that he sought, yet he was stricken with the leprosy, and so openly shamed.

Think on this, you that are bribers, when you go so secretly about such things; have this in your minds, when you devise your secret fetches and conveyance, how Elisha's servant was served, and was openly known. For God's proverb will be true, "There is nothing hidden that shall not be revealed."

He that took the silver basin and ewer for a bribe, thinks that it will never come out, but he may not know that I know it, and I know it not alone, there are more beside me that know it. Oh briber and bribery! he never was a good man that will so take bribes. Nor can I ever believe that he that is a briber shall be a good justice. It will never be well in England till we have the skins of such.* For what needs bribing where men do things uprightly; as to men that are officers and have a charge in their hands?

But now I will speak as St. Paul, and translate the thing on myself. I will become the king's officer for awhile. I have to lay out for the king twenty thousand pounds, or a great sum, whatsoever it is: well, when I have laid it out, and bring in mine account, I must give three hundred marks to have my bills warranted.† If I have done truly and uprightly, why should I need to give a penny to have my bills warranted? If I have done my office truly, and bring in a true account, wherefore should one groat be given? yea, one groat for warranting of my bills? Smell ye nothing in this? What needeth any bribes except the bills are false? No man gives bribes for warranting of his bills, except they are false bills.

Well, such practice has been in England, but beware; it will out one day: beware of God's proverb, "There is nothing hidden that shall not be opened:" yea, even in this world, if you are not the children of damnation. And here now I speak to you, my master minters, augmentationers, receivers, surveyors, and auditors; I make a petition unto you: I beseech you all, be good to the king; he has been good to you, therefore be good to him: yea, be good to your own souls. You are known well enough what you were before you came to your offices, and what lands you had then, and what you have purchased since,

* A custom formerly in Turkey. † Examined and passed.

and what buildings you make daily. Well, I pray you so build, that the king's workmen may be paid. They make their moan that they can get no money. The poor labourers, gun-makers, powdermen, bow-makers, arrow-makers, smiths, carpenters, soldiers, and other crafts, cry out for their dues. They are unpaid some of them three or four months; yea, some of them half a year: yea, some of them put up bills this time twelve months for their money, and cannot be paid yet. They cry out for their money, and, as the prophet saith, "The cry of the workmen is come up to mine ears." O, for God's love, let the workmen be paid, if there is money enough; or else there will whole showers of God's vengeance rain down upon your heads. Therefore, ye minters, and ye augmentationers,* serve the king truly. So build and purchase that the king may have money to pay his workmen. It seems evil-favoured that you should have enough wherewith to build superfluously, and the king lack to pay his poor labourers. Well, yet I doubt not but that there are some good officers. But I will not swear for all.

I have now preached three Lents. The first time I preached restitution. "Restitution, quoth some, what should he preach of restitution? Let him preach of contrition, quoth they, and let restitution alone; we can never make restitution." Then, say I, if thou wilt not make restitution, thou shalt go to the devil for it. Now choose thee, either restitution, or else endless damnation. But now there are two manner of restitutions, secret restitution, and open restitution; whichever of them it be, so that restitution be made, it is all good enough. At my first preaching of restitution, one good man took remorse of conscience, and acknowledged himself to me, that he had deceived the king, and he was willing to make restitution: and so the first Lent came to my hands twenty pounds to be restored to the king's use. I was promised twenty pounds more the same Lent, but it could not be made up, so that it came not. Well, the next Lent came three hundred and twenty pounds more. I received it myself, and paid it to the king's council. So I was asked, who he was that thus made restitution? But should I have named

* Certain officers so called belonging to a court set up by Henry the Eighth, for the increase of his revenues by the suppression of monasteries and religious houses. It was called the Augmentation Court. It was dissolved by queen Mary.

him? Nay, they should as soon have this wesant* of mine. Well, now this Lent came one hundred and fourscore pounds ten shillings, which I have paid and delivered this present day to the king's council: and so this man has made a godly restitution. "And so," said I to a certain nobleman that is one of the king's council, "if every man that has beguiled the king should make restitution after this sort, it would cough up for† the king twenty thousand pounds, I think, quoth I." "Yea, that it would," quoth the other, "a whole hundred thousand pounds." Alack, alack; make restitution for God's sake, make restitution; ye will cough in hell else. There is no remedy, but restitution open or secret, or else hell.‡

This that I have now told you of was a secret restitution. Some examples there have been of open restitution, and glad may he be that God was so friendly unto him, to bring him unto it in this world. I am not afraid to name him; it was Master Sherrington, an honest gentleman, and one that God loveth.‖ He openly confessed that he had deceived the king, and he made open restitution. Oh what an argument may he have against the devil, when he shall move him to desperation. God brought this out to his amendment. It is a token that he is a chosen man of God, and one of his elected. If he is of God, he shall be brought to it, therefore for God's sake make restitution, or else remember God's proverb; "There is nothing so secret that shall not be revealed." If you do either of these two in this world, then you are of God; if not, then for lack of restitution you shall have eternal damnation. You may do it by means; if you dare not do it yourselves, bring it to another, and so make restitution. If you are not of God's flock, it shall be brought out to your shame and damnation at the last day, when all evil men's sins shall be laid open before us. Yet there is one way how all our sins may be hidden, which is—repent and amend. Repenting and amending is a sure remedy, and a sure way to hide all, that it shall not come out to our shame and confusion.

Yet there was another seed that Christ was sowing in

* Windpipe; he means his breath, "his life."

† Make restitution to.

‡ The person here alluded to who made restitution was doubtless John Bradford; see his life.

‖ He had been Master of the Mint.

that sermon of his; and this was the seed. I say to you, my friends, "fear not him that killeth the body, but fear him that after he hath killed, hath power also to cast into hell-fire," &c. And there to put his disciples in comfort and sure hope of his help, and out of all doubt and mistrust of his assistance, he brings in the example of the sparrows, how they are fed by God's mere providence and goodness: and also of the hairs of our heads; how that not so much as one hair falleth from our heads without him: "Fear him, saith he, that when he hath killed the body, may also cast into hell-fire." Here is matter for all kinds of people, but especially for kings.

And therefore here is another suit to your highness. "Fear not him that killeth the body." Fear not these foreign princes and foreign powers. God shall make you strong enough. Stick to God; fear God, fear not them. God has sent you many storms in your youth, but forsake not God, and he will not forsake you. Peradventure you shall have them that shall move you, and say unto you, "Oh, sir, Oh such a one is a great man, he is a mighty prince, a king of great power, you cannot be without his friendship, agree with him in religion, or else you shall have him your enemy," &c. Well, fear them not, but cleave to God, and he shall defend you. Do not as king Ahaz did, who was afraid of the Assyrian king, and for fear lest he should have him for his enemy, was content to forsake God, and to agree with him in religion, and worshipping of God: and anon sent to Uriah, the high priest, who was ready at once to set up the idolatry of the Assyrian king. Let not your highness do so, fear not the best of them all; but fear God. The same Uriah was "a chaplain at hand," an elbow chaplain. If you will turn, you shall have that will turn with you, yea, even in their white rochets. But follow not Ahaz. Remember the hair how it falls not without God's providence. Remember the sparrows, how they build in every house, and God provides for them; "And you are much more precious to me, saith Christ, than sparrows or other birds." God will defend you, that before your time comes, you shall not die nor miscarry.

On a time when Christ was going to Jerusalem, his disciples said unto him, "They there would have stoned thee, and wilt thou now go thither again?" "What,"

saith he again to them, "are there not twelve hours in the day?" God hath appointed his times as pleaseth him, and before the time comes that God hath appointed, they shall have no power against you. Therefore stick to God and forsake him not, but fear him, and fear not men. And beware chiefly of two affections, fear and love. Fear, as Ahaz, of whom I have told you, that for fear of the Assyrian king he changed his religion, and thereby purchased God's high indignation to him and to his realm. And love, as Dinah, Jacob's daughter, caused a change of religion, by Shechem and Hamor, who were contented with it for lust of a wife, to the destruction and spoiling of all the whole city.

Read the chronicles of England and France, and you shall see what changes of religion have come by marriages, and for marriages. Marry my daughter, and be baptized, and so forth, or else, &c. Fear them not. Remember the sparrows. And this rule should all states and degrees of men follow; whereas now they fear men and not God. If there is a trial between a great man and a poor man, then must there be a corruption of justice for fear. "Oh he is a great man, I dare not displease him," &c. Fie upon thee, art thou a judge, and wilt thou be afraid to give right judgment? Fear him not, be he ever so great a man, but uprightly do true justice. Likewise some pastors go from their cure, they are afraid of the plague, they dare not come nigh any sick body, but hire others, and they go away themselves. Out upon thee: the wolf comes upon thy flock to devour them, and when they have most need of thee, thou runnest away from them. The soldier also that should go on warfare, he will draw back as much as he can. "Oh I shall be slain! Oh such and such went, and never came home again. Such men went the last year into Norfolk, and were slain there."* Thus they are afraid to go: they will labour to tarry at home. If the king command thee to go, thou art bound to go, and serving the king thou servest God. If thou serve God, he will not shorten thy days to thine hurt. "Well," say some, "if they had not gone, they had lived unto this day." How knowest thou that? who made thee so privy to God's coun-

* At that time there were few or no regular troops, but in case of rebellion or invasion every man was bound to serve as a soldier for a certain number of days.

sel? Follow thy vocation, and serve the king when he calls thee. In serving him thou shalt serve God; and till thy time come, thou shalt not die.

It was a marvel that Jonas escaped in such a city. What then? Yet God preserved him, so that he could not perish. Take, therefore, an example of Jonas, and every man follow his vocation, not fearing men, but fearing God.

Another seed that Christ was sowing in the sermon was this: "He that confesseth me before men, I shall also confess him before my Father." We must confess him with the mouth.

Well, another seed was, "He that sinneth against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world nor in the world to come." What is this same sin against the Holy Ghost, a horrible sin that never shall be forgiven, neither in this world nor in the world to come? what is this sin? Final impenitence, and some say, impugning of the truth. One came to me once that despaired, because of sin against the Holy Ghost. He was sore troubled in his conscience, that he should be damned, and that it was not possible for him to be saved, because he had sinned against the Holy Ghost. I said to him, "What, man, comfort yourself in these words of the apostle: 'Christ is a propitiation for all our sins.' And again; 'My Father hath for this purpose sent me into the world, that he which believeth in me may not perish, but may have the life everlasting.' Also, 'In what hour soever the sinner shall mourn for his sin, he shall be saved.' I had Scriptures enough for me, as I thought, but say whatever I could say, he could say more against himself than I could say at that time to do him good withal. Where some say that the sin against the Holy Ghost is original sin; I alleged against that the saying of St. Paul, 'If a man had done all the sins in the world, and have true repentance, with faith and hope in God's mercy, he shall be forgiven.' But whatsoever I said he could still object against me, and avoid my reasons. I was fain to take another day, and did so. "Let me go to my book," said I, "and go you to your prayers, for you are not altogether without faith." I got me to my study; I read many doctors, but none could content me, no expositor could please me, nor satisfy my mind in the matter. And it is with me as it was with a scholar of Cambridge, who being demanded of his tutor how he

understood his lesson, and what it meant; "I know," said he, "what it means, but I cannot tell it; I cannot express it." So I understand it well enough, but I cannot well declare it. Nevertheless I will bungle at it as well as I can.

Now to tell you by the way what sin it was that he had committed. He had fallen from the known truth; and afterward fell to mocking and scorning of it; and this sin it was that he thought to be unforgiveable. I said unto him, that it was a vehement manner of speaking in Scripture; "Yet," quoth I, "this is not spoken universally, nor is it meant that God never forgives it, but it is commonly called irremissible, unforgiveable, because that God seldom forgives it: but yet there is no sin so great but God may forgive it, and does forgive it to the repentant heart, though in words it sounds as if it shall never be forgiven: as the privilege of a few persons does not destroy a universal rule or saying of Scripture. For the Scripture saith, 'We shall die every one of us:' yet some shall be rapt and taken alive, as St. Paul saith; for this privilege of a few doth not hurt a generality. An irremissible sin, an inexcusable sin; yet to him that will truly repent it is forgiveable, in Christ it may be remitted: if there be no more than one man forgiven, you may be that same one man who shall be forgiven, 'Where iniquity hath abounded, there shall grace abound.'" Thus by little and little this man came to a settled conscience again, and took comfort in Christ's mercy. Therefore despair not, though it is said it shall never be forgiven. Where Cain said, "My wickedness is so great that God cannot forgive it;" nay, thou liest, saith Augustine of Cain, "The mercy of God is greater than thine iniquity." Therefore despair not; but this one thing I say, beware of this sin that you fall not into it; for I have known no more than this one man, who hath fallen from the truth, and hath afterwards repented and come to grace again. I have known many, since God hath opened mine eyes to see a little, I have known many I say, that knew more than I, and some whom I have honoured, that have afterwards fallen from the truth, but never one of them, except this man, has returned to grace and to the truth again.

But yet, though God very seldom forgives this sin, and although it is one of the sins that God hates most of all others, and such as is almost never forgiven, yet it is for-

giveable in the blood of Christ, if one truly repent; and lo it is universal. As there is also another Scripture, "Woe be to the land, to the realm whose king is a child;" which some interpret and refer to childish conditions. But it is commonly true the other way too, when it is referred to the age and years of childhood. For where the king is within age, they that have governance about the king, have much liberty to live voluptuously, and licentiously; and not to be in fear how they govern, as they would be, if the king were of full age, and then commonly they govern not well. But Josiah and one or two more, though they were children, had their realms well governed, and reigned prosperously; and yet the saying is nevertheless true for all that.

And this I gather of this irremissible sin against the Holy Ghost, that the Scripture saith, it is never forgiven, because it is seldom forgiven. For indeed I think that there is no sin, which God doth so seldom, nor so hardly forgive, as this sin of falling away from the truth; after that a man once knows it. And indeed this took best place with the man that I have told you of, and best quieted his conscience.

Another seed was this: "Be not careful, saith Christ, what you shall say before judges and magistrates, when you are brought before them for my name's sake; for the Holy Ghost shall put in your minds even at the present hour, what you shall speak."

A comfortable saying, and a goodly promise of the Holy Ghost: "That the adversaries of the truth, saith he, shall not be able to resist us." What? shall the adversaries of the truth be dumb? Nay; there are no greater talkers, nor boasters, and facers than they be. But they shall not be able to resist the truth to destroy it.

Here some will say, "What need of universities then, and the preservation of schools? The Holy Ghost will give always what to say." Yea, but for all that we may not tempt God; we must trust in the Holy Ghost, but we must not presume on the Holy Ghost.

Here now should I speak of universities, and for preferring* of schools: but he that preached the last Sunday spoke very well in it, and substantially, and like one that knew the state and condition of the universities and schools very well. But thus much I say unto you, magistrates;

* Maintaining.

if you will not maintain schools and universities, ye shall have a brutality.*

Therefore now a suit again to your Highness.—So order the matter that preaching may not decay: for surely, if preaching decay, ignorance and brutishness will enter again. Nor give the preachers' livings to secular men. What should the secular men do with the livings of preachers? I think there are at this day ten thousand students less than were within these twenty years, and fewer preachers; and that is the cause of rebellion. If there were good bishops, there would be no rebellion.

I am now almost come to my matter, saving one saying of Christ which was another seed; "Give, and it shall be given unto you," &c. But who believes this? If men believed this promise, they would give more than they do; and at least they would not stick to give a little; but now-a-days men's study is set rather to take gifts, and to get of other men's goods, than to give any of their own. So all the promises are mistrusted and unbelieved. For if the rich men believed this promise of God, they would willingly and readily give a little, to have the overplus. So where Christ saith of injuries, or offences and trespasses, "Leave the avenging of wrongs alone unto me, and I shall pay them home," &c.—If the rebels had believed this promise they would not have done as they did. So all the promises of God are mistrusted. Noah also after the flood feared at every rain lest the world should be drowned, and destroyed again; till God gave the rainbow. And what exercise shall we have by the rainbow? We may learn by the rainbow, that God will be true to his promises, and will fulfil his promises. For God sent the rainbow, and four thousand years it is, and more, since this promise was made, and yet God has been true to his promise unto this day. So that now when we see the rainbow, we may learn that God is true to his promise. And as God was true in this promise, so he is and will be in all the rest. But the covetous man does not believe that God is true to his promise, for if he did he would not stick to give of his goods to the poor.

But as touching what I spake before, when we see the rainbow, and see in the rainbow that which is like water, and of a watery colour, we may and ought not only thereby to take hold and comfort of God's promise, that he will no

* Brutish ignorance.

more destroy the world with water for sin; but also we may take an example to fear God, who in such wise hates sin. Likewise, when in the rainbow we see that it is of a fiery colour, and like unto fire; we may gather an example of the end of the world, that except we amend, the world shall at last be consumed with fire, for sin, and fear the judgment of God, according to which they that are damned shall be burned in hell fire. These were the seeds that Christ was sowing, when this covetous man came unto him. And now I am come to my matter.

While Christ was thus preaching, this covetous fellow would not tarry till all the sermon was done, but interrupted the sermon, even suddenly chopping in: "Master, speak to my brother, that he may divide the inheritance with me." He would not abide to the end of the sermon; but his mind was on his halfpenny, and he would needs have his matter despatched out of hand. "Master, (quoth he,) let my brother divide with me." Yet this was a good fellow; he could be contented with part, he desired not to have all together alone to himself, but could be content with a division, and to have his part of the inheritance: and what was the inheritance? A field. So that it was but one piece of ground, or one farm. This covetous man could be content with the half of one farm, whereas our men now-a-days cannot be satisfied with many farms at once: one man must now have as many farms as will serve many men, or else he will not be contented nor satisfied. They will jar now-a-days one with another, except they have all. "Oh," saith the wise man, "there are three things wherein my soul delighteth; 'the unity of brethren; the love of neighbours; and a man and wife agreeing well together.'" So that the concord of brethren, and agreeing of brethren, is a pleasant thing. What saith Solomon of this matter? "The brother that is holpen of his brother, is a sure and well-fenced city, and a strong tower." He is so strong—O, it is a great matter, when brethren love and hold together: but if one go about to pull down the other, then are they weak both of them; and when one pulls down his fellow, they must needs down both of them; there is no stay to hold them up.

Mark in the chronicles of England. Two brethren have reigned jointly together, the one on this side Humber, and the other beyond Humber, in Scotland, and all

that way. And what has come of it? So long as they have agreed well together, so long they have prospered; and when they have jarred, they have both gone to wreck. Brethren that have so reigned here in England, have quarrelled one with another; and the younger has not been contented with his portion, as indeed the younger brother commonly jarreth first, but by the contention both have fared the worse. So when there is any contention between brother and brother for land, commonly they are both undone by it. And that crafty merchant, whatever he be, that will set brother against brother, means to destroy them both. But of these two brethren, whether this man were the elder or the younger, I cannot say; Scripture tells me not which of these two was the younger; but likely this was the younger; for once it was a plain law, that the elder brother had a double portion; and therefore of likelihood it should be the youngest brother that found himself aggrieved, and was not content. But Christ said unto him, "Thou man, who hath made me a judge or a divider between you?" Christ answered him by a question; and mark this question of Christ, "Thou man, who made me a judge?" &c. It is no small matter, saith Augustine, of what intention one asks a question; as Christ in another place of the gospel asks who was neighbour to the pilgrim that was wounded. "There was, saith Christ, a man that went from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, and they wounded him, and left him for dead. And a priest came by, that was his own countryman, and let him lie; a Levite came by, and would show no compassion upon him: at last a Samaritan came by, and set him on his horse, and conveyed him to the city, and provided surgery for him, &c. Now who was neighbour to this wounded man?" saith Christ. "He that showed mercy unto him," said the lawyer. He that did the office of a neighbour, he was neighbour. . .

But to the purpose of Christ's question, "Who made me a judge between you?" Here one of those German enthusiasts will say, "Ah, Christ refused the office of a judge, therefore there ought to be no judges nor magistrates among Christian men. If it had been a lawful thing, Christ would not have refused to do the office of a judge, and to have determined the variance between these two brethren. But Christ thereby signified, that he was not sent for that office. If thou wilt have a trial and a sen-

tence of that matter according to the laws, thou must go to the temporal judge that is deputed therefore. But Christ's meaning was, that he was come for another purpose, he had another office deputed unto him, than to be a judge in temporal matters; "I am come, saith he, to call sinners to repentance." He was come to preach the gospel, the remission of sin, and the kingdom of God: and meant not thereby to disallow the office of temporal magistrates. Nay, if Christ had meant that there should be no magistrates, he would have bid him take all; but Christ meant not so. But the matter is, that this covetous man, this brother, took his mark amiss; for he came to a wrong man to seek redress of his matter. For Christ did not forbid him to seek his remedy at the magistrate's hand, but Christ refused to take upon him the office, which was not his calling.

For Christ had another vocation than to be a judge between such as contended about matters of land. If our rebels had had this in their minds they would not have been their own judges, but they would have sought the redress of their grief at the hands of the king and his magistrates under him appointed. But no marvel of their blindness and ignorance; for the bishops are out of their dioceses that should teach them. But this man perchance had heard, and thought that Christ was Messias, whose reign in words sounds as if it were a corporeal and a temporal reign, and who should do justice and see redress in all matters of worldly controversy: which is a necessary office in a Christian realm, and must needs be put in execution for ministering of justice. And therefore I require you, (as a suitor rather than a preacher,) look to your office yourself, and lay not all on your officers' backs; receive the bills of supplication yourself: I do not see you do so now-a-days as you were wont to do the last year.

For God's sake look unto it, and see to the ministering of justice your own self, and let poor suitors have answer. There is a king in Christendom, and it is the king of Denmark,* who sits openly in justice thrice in the week, and has the doors kept open for that purpose. I have heard it reported of one who has been there, and seen the proof of it many a time and oft: and the last justice that ever he saw done there, was of a priest's cause that had

* Christian III.

his glebe land taken from him, (and now here in England some go about to take away all;) but this priest had his glebe land taken from him by a great man. Well, first went out letters for this man to appear at a day: process went out for him according to the order of the law, and charged him by virtue of those letters to appear before the king at such a day. The day came: the king sat in his hall ready to minister justice. The priest was there present. The gentleman, this lord, this great man, was called, and commanded to make his appearance according to the writ that had been directed out for him. And the lord came, and was there, but he appeared not. "Was he summoned as he should be?" asked the king. "Had he any warning to be here?" It was answered, Yea, and that he was there walking up and down in the hall; and that he knew well enough that it was his day, and also that he had already been called, but he said, he would not come before the king at that time; alleging, that he needed not as yet make an answer, because he had received but one summoning. "No," quoth the king, "is he here present?" "Yea, forsooth, sir," said the priest. The king commanded him to be called, and to come before him: and the end was this, he made this lord, this great man, restore unto the priest not only the glebe land which he had taken from the priest, but also the rent and profit thereof, for so long time as he had withholden it from the priest, which was eight years or thereabouts. Saith he, "When you can show better evidence than the priest hath done, why it ought to be your land, then he shall restore it to you again, and the profits that he shall receive in the mean time; but till that day come, I charge you that you suffer him peaceably to enjoy that which is his."

This is a noble king, and this I tell for your example, that you may do the like. Look upon the matter yourself. Poor men put up bills every day, and are never the nearer. Confirm your kingdom in judgment, and begin doing your own office yourself, even now while you are young; and sit once or twice in the week in council among your lords; it shall cause things to have good success, and that matters shall not be lingered forth from day to day. It is good for every man to do his own office, and to see it well executed and discharged.

Ahaziah, king in Judah, would needs do the office of the priest, and would needs offer incense in the sanctuary,

which it was the priest's office to do. But he was suddenly stricken with the leprosy for his labour, and so continued a leper all the days of his life.

St. John Baptist's disciples would have had their master take upon him that he was Christ. But what said John? "No man may take anything upon himself, except it be given unto him from above." If the Devonshire men had well considered this, they had not provoked the plagues that they have had light upon them. But unpreaching prelacy hath been the chief cause of all this hurly-burly and commotions. But if Christ may challenge any kind of men for taking his office upon them, he may say to the mass-mongers, Who gave you commission to offer up Christ? Who gave you authority to take mine office in hand? for it is only Christ's office to do that. It is a great matter to offer Christ; if Christ had offered his body at the last supper, then should we do so too. Who is worthy to offer up Christ? an abominable presumption! Paul saith, "He took bread, and after that he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, 'Take ye, eat ye,' &c., and so said, 'This is my body.'" He gave thanks; well then; in thanksgiving there is no oblation; and when he gave thanks, it was not his body.

When I was under examination, I was asked many questions, and it was said to me, what Christ did that should we do. A bishop gathered that upon these words, "Do this in remembrance of me:" then said he to me, How know you that they ate it, before he said, "This is my body?" I answered again and said, How know you that they did not eat it? &c. So I brought unto him the place of Paul abovesaid, and that in thanksgiving is none oblation, and when he gave thanks it was not his body, for he gave thanks in the beginning of supper, before they ate any manner of things at all, as his accustomed manner was to do. I wonder therefore that they will or dare by this text take upon them to offer Christ's body: they should rather say, "Who made me an offerer?" But when Christ said, "Who hath made me a judge or a divider of lands among you?" Christ refused another man's office, an office that he was not of his Father deputed unto. Christ's kingdom was a spiritual kingdom, and his office was a spiritual office, and he was a spiritual judge. And therefore when the woman taken in adultery was brought before him, he refused not to be the judge, but said, "Who

accuseth thee?" And she said again, "No man, Lord." Then said he, "Nor do I condemn thee. Go thy way, and sin no more." Here he took upon him his own office, and did his office; for his office was to preach, and bid sinners amend their evil living; and not to be a temporal judge in temporal causes. And here is another occasion of a suit to your Highness, for the punishment of lechery, for it floweth in England like a flood.

But now to make an end in temporal causes. He said, "Who made me a judge of temporal causes among you, and of worldly matters?" Thus came this fellow interrupting Christ's sermon, and received the answer which I have rehearsed, "Thou man, thou fellow, (quoth he,) who hath made me a judge among you?" And he said unto all the audience, "See and beware of covetousness." Why so? "For no man's life standeth in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." We may have things necessary, and we may have abundance of things, but the abundance doth not make us blessed. It is no good argument, "The more riches a man hath, the more happily and the more blissfully he liveth." For a certain great man, that had purchased much land, a thousand marks by year, or I wot not what—he had a great portion. And so on the way, as he was in his journey towards London, or from London, he fell sick by the way; a disease took him, that he was constrained to lie down. And so being in his bed, the disease grew more and more upon him, that he was by his friends that were about him piously advised to look to himself, and to make him ready for God; for there was no other likelihood but that he must die without remedy. He cried out, "What, shall I die? wounds, sides, heart, shall I die, and thus go from my goods? go, fetch me some physician that may save my life. Wounds and sides, shall I thus die?" There lay he still in his bed like a block, with nothing but "wounds and sides, shall I die?" Within a very little while he died indeed, and then lay he like a block indeed. There were black gowns, torches, tapers, and ringing of bells; but what is become of him God knoweth, and not I.

But hereby you may perceive, that it is not the abundance of riches that makes a man live quietly and blissfully. But the quiet life is in mediocrity.* They that are in a mean*

* A middle state.

do live best. And there is a proverb which I read many years ago: "The half is sometimes more than the whole." The mean* life is the best life, and the most quiet life of all. If a man should fill himself up to the throat, he should not find ease in it, but displeasure, and with the one half he might satisfy his greedy appetite. So great riches never make a man's life quiet, but rather troublous. I remember here a saying of Solomon, and his example, "I gathered silver and gold together, I provided me singers, and women which could play on instruments, to make mirth and pastime. I gat me psalteries and songs of music, &c., and thus my heart rejoiced in all that I did." But what was the end of all this? "When I considered, saith Solomon, all the works that my hands had wrought, &c., lo all was but vanity and vexation of mind; and nothing of any value under the sun." Therefore, leave covetousness, for believe me, if I had an enemy, the first thing that I would wish him should be, that he might have abundance of riches; for so I am sure he should never be in quiet. Think you there are not many that would be so hurt? But in this place of the gospel, Christ spake and declared the unquietness, and uncertainty of great riches, by a similitude and parable of a great rich man, who had much land, that brought forth all fruits plentifully; and he being proud of this, and very unquiet by reason that he had so much, said to himself: "What shall I do, because I have not room enough wherein to bestow my fruits, that have grown unto me of my lands? I will do thus, saith he, I will pull down my barns, and build greater barns; and I will say to my soul, My soul, thou hast much goods laid up in store for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said to him, Thou fool, thou fool, this night will they take thy soul from thee, and then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided? Even so it is with him, saith Christ, that gathereth riches unto himself, and is not rich toward God," &c. But yet the covetous man can never be content. I walked one day with a gentleman in a park, and the man regarded not my talk, but cast his head and eye this and that way, so that I perceived he gave no great ear to me, which when I saw I held my peace. At last, "Oh, said the gentleman, if this park were mine, I would never desire more while I lived." I an-

* Middle.

swered and said, "Sir, and what if you had that park too? for there was another park even hard by." This gentleman laughed at the matter. And truly I think he was diseased with the dropsy, the more he had the more covetous he was to have still more and more. This was a farmer that had a farm hard by it, and if he might have had this park to it, he would never have desired more. This was a farmer not altogether so covetous a man as there are many now-a-days, as for one gentleman to rake up all the farms in the country together into his hands all at once.

And here one suit more to your Highness; there lacketh one thing in this realm, that it hath need of; make some promoters.* There lack promoters, such as were in king Henry the Seventh's days, your grandfather. There lack men to promote† the king's officers when they do amiss, and to promote all offenders. I think there is great need of such men of godly discretion, wisdom and conscience, to promote transgressors, as rent-raisers, oppressors of the poor, extortioners, bribers, usurers. I hear there are usurers in England, that will take forty in the hundred; but I hear of no promoters to put them up. We read not, that this covetous farmer, or landed man in the gospel, bought corn in the markets to lay it up in store, and then sell it again. But and if it please your Highness, I hear say that in England we have landlords (nay, step-lords, I might say) that are become graziers, and burgesses are become regraters, and some farmers will regrate and buy up all the corn that comes to the markets and lay it up in store, and sell it again at a higher price, when they see their time. I heard a merchantman say, that he had travailed all the days of his life in the trade of merchandise; and had gotten three or four thousand pounds by buying and selling; but in case he might be licensed or suffered so to do, he would get a thousand pound a year, only by buying and selling of grain here within this realm. Yea, and, as I hear say, aldermen now-a-days are become colliers. They are both wood-mongers and makers of coals.‡ I would wish he might eat nothing but coals for awhile, till he had amended it. A poor body cannot buy a sack of coals, but it must come through their hands. But this rich man that the gospel speaks of was a covetous man, God had given him plenty,

* Officers whose business was to inform against evil-doers.
† Inform against.
‡ Charcoal; other coal was then scarcely used.

but that made him not a good man: it is another thing that makes a good man; God saith, "If thou obey not my voice," &c. And therefore worldly riches do not declare the favour or disfavour of God. The Scripture saith, "God hath ordained all things to be good; and the devil laboureth to turn all things to man's evil." God giveth men plenty of riches to exercise their faith and charity, to confirm them that are good, to draw them that are naught, and to bring them to repentance; and the devil worketh altogether to the contrary. And it is an old proverb, 'The more wicked the more fortunate.' But the unquietness of this covetous rich man, declares the unquietness of the mind, that riches bring with them. First, they are all in care how to get riches, and then are they in more care how to keep them still. Therefore the apostle saith, "They that study to get great riches, do fall into many divers temptations. But the root of all evil is covetousness." "What shall I do?" saith this rich man. He asked his own brainless head what he should do; he did not ask of the Scripture; for if he had asked of the Scripture, it would have told him, it would have said unto him, "Break thy bread unto the hungry." All the affection of men now-a-days is in building gay and sumptuous houses, it is in setting up and pulling down, and never have they done building. But the end of all such great riches and covetousness is this: "This night, thou fool, thy soul shall be taken from thee." It is to be understood of all that rise up from little to much, as this rich man that the gospel spake of did. I do not despise riches, but I wish that men should have riches as Abraham had, and as Joseph had. For a man to have riches to help his neighbour, is godly riches. The worldly riches, is to put all his trust and confidence in his worldly riches, that he may by them live here gallantly, pleasantly, and voluptuously. Is this godly riches? No, no, this is not godly riches. It is a common saying now-a-days among many, "Oh he is a rich man. He is well worth five hundred pounds." He is well worth five hundred pounds that hath given fifty pounds* to the poor, otherwise it is none of his. Yea, but who shall have this five hundred pounds? For whom hast thou gotten this five hundred pounds? What saith Solomon? Ecclesiastes v., "Another evil, and another very naughty imperfection, is riches hoarded up, and kept together to the

* Some of the editions read five hundred pounds to the poor.

owner's own harm;" for many times such riches perish and consume away miserably. Such a one shall sometime have a son, said he, that shall be a very beggar, and live in extreme penury. O goodly riches, that one man shall get it, and another come to devour it! Therefore, "See and beware of covetousness." Believe God's words, for they will not deceive you nor lie. "Heaven and earth shall perish, but the word of the Lord abideth, and endureth for ever." O, this leavened faith! this unseasoned faith! beware of this unseasoned faith. A certain man asked me this question, Didst thou ever see a man live long that had great riches? Therefore saith the wise man, "If God send thee riches, use them." If God send thee abundance, use it according to the rule of God's word, and study to be rich in our Saviour Jesus Christ; to whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be all honour, glory, and praise, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

THE FIRST

OF SEVEN SERMONS

ON THE LORD'S PRAYER.

Preached before the virtuous and honourable lady Katherine, Duchess of Suffolk,* in the year of our Lord 1552.

MATTHEW vi.

Our Father which art in heaven, &c.

I HAVE entered of late in the way of preaching, and spoken many things of prayer, and rather of prayer than of any other thing: for I think there is nothing more necessary to be spoken of, or more abused than prayer is by the craft and subtlety of the devil; for many things are taken for prayer when they are nothing less. Therefore at this same time also I have thought it good to treat of prayer, to the intent that it might be known how precious a thing right prayer is. I told you,

First, What prayer is.

Secondly, To Whom we ought to pray.

Thirdly, Where and in what place we ought to pray, And,

Fourthly, I told you the diversity of prayer, namely, of common prayer and the private.

These and such like things I have dilated on and expounded unto you in the open pulpit.

Now at this present time I intend by the way of a lecture, at the request of my most gracious lady, to expound unto you, her household servants, and others that are willing to hear, the right understanding and meaning of this most perfect prayer which our Saviour himself taught us, at the request of his disciples, which prayer we call the *Paternoster*. This prayer of our Lord may be called a

* Katherine, Duchess-Dowager of Suffolk, was the daughter and sole heiress of Lord Willoughby of Eresby, and widow of Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, the favourite of Henry VIII. She was attached to the principles of the Reformation, and afterwards married Richard Bertie, Esq., ancestor of the Dukes of Ancaster. When Queen Mary came to the throne they had reason to expect that Bishop Gardiner would bring them into trouble on account of their religion, upon which they escaped to the continent with some difficulty. The particulars are related by Hollinshed and Fox. During their exile they were exposed to many dangers, but were preserved, and returned to England on the accession of Queen Elizabeth. The Duchess died in 1580.

prayer above all prayers, the principal and most perfect prayer, which prayer ought to be regarded above all others, considering that our Saviour himself is the author of it; he was the maker of this prayer, being very God and very man. He taught us this prayer, who is a most perfect schoolmaster, and commanded us to say it; which prayer contains great and wonderful things, if a learned man had the handling of it. But as for me, such things as I have conceived by the reading of learned men's books, so far forth as God will give me his grace and Spirit, I will show unto you touching the true meaning of it, and what is to be understood by every word contained in that prayer; for there is no word idle or spoken in vain. For it must needs be perfect, good, and of great importance, being our Saviour's teaching, who is the wisdom of God itself. There are many other psalms and prayers in Scripture very good and godly, and it is good to know them. But it is with this prayer, the Lord's Prayer, I say, like as with the law of love: all the laws of Moses, as concerning what is to be done to please God, how to walk before him uprightly and godly; all such laws are contained in the law of love, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself:" (Matt. xxii.) even so is it with this prayer. For as the law of love is the sum and abridgement of the other laws, so this prayer is the sum and abridgement of all other prayers; all other prayers are contained in this prayer; yea, whatsoever mankind hath need of as to soul and body, that same is contained in this prayer.

This prayer hath two parts; it has a preface, which some call a salutation or a loving entrance; secondly, the prayer itself. The entrance is this; when ye pray, say, "Our Father, which art in heaven;" as who should say, you Christian people, you who bear the name of Christians, you must pray so.

Before I go any further, I must put you in remembrance to consider how much we are bound to our Saviour Christ, that he vouchsafed to teach us to pray, and in this prayer to signify unto us the good-will which our heavenly Father beareth towards us. Now to the matter:

"Our Father." These words pertain not to the petitions, they are but an entering, a seeking favour at God's hand; yet if we well weigh and consider them, they admonish us of many things and strengthen our faith wondrously

well. For this word FATHER signifies that we are Christ's brothers, and that God is our Father. He is the eldest Son, he is the Son of God by nature, we are his sons by adoption through his goodness; therefore he bids us call him our Father, who is to be had in fresh memory, and great reputation. For here we are admonished that we are "reconciled unto God; we, which before times were his enemies, are made now the children of God, and inheritors of everlasting life." This we are admonished by this word Father. So that it is a word of much importance and great reputation: for it confirms our faith, when we call him Father. Therefore our Saviour, when he teaches to call God, Father, teacheth us to understand the fatherly affection which God bears towards us; which makes us bold and hearty to call upon him, knowing that he bears a good-will towards us, and that he will surely hear our prayers.

When we are in trouble, we doubt as to a stranger whether he will help us or not: but our Saviour commanding us to call God, Father, teaches us to be assured of the love and good-will of God towards us. So by this word "Father," we learn to stablish and to comfort our faith, knowing most assuredly that he will be good unto us. For Christ was a perfect schoolmaster, he lacked no wisdom; he knew his Father's will and pleasure; he teaches us, yea and most certainly assures us, that God will be no cruel judge, but a loving Father. Here we see what advantages we have in this word, "Father." Seeing now that we find such advantages by this one word, we ought to consider the whole prayer with great diligence and earnest mind. For there is no word or letter contained in this prayer, but it is of great importance, and therefore it is necessary for us to know and understand it thoroughly; and then to speak it considerately with great devotion; else it is to no purpose to speak the words without understanding, it is but lip labour and vain babbling, and unworthy to be called prayer; as it was in times past used in England.*

Therefore when you say this prayer, well consider what you say; for it is better once said deliberately, with understanding, than a thousand times without understanding; which is in very deed but vain babbling; and so more a displeasure than pleasure unto God. For the matter lies not in much saying but in well saying. So, if it is said to

* In Latin; most people that used it being totally ignorant of the meaning of the words.

the honour of God, then it has its effect, and we shall have our petitions; for God is true in his promises: and our Saviour, knowing him to be well affected towards us, commands us therefore to call him Father.

Here you must understand that as our Saviour was most earnest and fervent in teaching us how to pray and call upon God for aid and help, and for things necessary both to our souls and bodies; so the devil, that old serpent, with no less diligence endeavours to hinder and stop our prayers, that we shall not call upon God. And amongst other hindrances, he has one especially wherewith he thinks to keep us from prayer, which is the remembrance of our sins. When he perceives us to be disposed to pray, he comes with his crafty and subtle conveyances, saying, What, wilt thou pray unto God for aid and help? Knowest thou not that thou art a wicked sinner, and a transgressor of the law of God? Look rather to be damned, and judged for thy ill doings, than to receive any benefit at his hands. Wilt thou call him Father, who is so holy a God, and thou art so wicked and miserable a sinner?

This the devil will say, and trouble our minds, to stop and hinder us from our prayer; and so to give us occasion not to pray unto God. In this temptation we must seek for some remedy and comfort; for the devil puts us in remembrance of our sins to keep us from prayer and invocation of God. The remedy for this temptation is to call our Saviour to remembrance, who has taught us to say this prayer: he knew his Father's pleasure, he knew what he did. When he commanded us to call God our Father, he knew we should find fatherly affections in God towards us. Call this, I say, to remembrance, and again remember that our Saviour hath cleansed, through his passion, all our sins, and taken away all our wickedness; so that as many as believe in him shall be the children of God. In such wise let us strive and fight against the temptations of the devil, who would not have us call upon God, because we are sinners. Catch thou hold of our Saviour, believe him, be assured in thy heart, that he with his suffering took away all thy sins. Consider again, that our Saviour calls us to prayer, and commands us to pray. Our sins hinder us, and withdraw us from prayer; but our Saviour makes them nothing: when we believe in him, it is like as if we had no sins. For he changes with us, he takes our sins and wickedness from us, and gives unto us his holi-

ness, righteousness, justice, fulfilling of the law; and so, consequently, everlasting life: so that we are like as if we had done no sin at all; for his righteousness stands us in as good stead as though we of ourselves had fulfilled the law to the uttermost.

Therefore our sins cannot hinder us, nor withdraw us from prayer: for they are gone, they are no sins, they cannot be hurtful unto us. Christ dying for us, as all the Scripture, both of the New and Old Testament, witnesseth; "He hath taken away our sorrows." Like as when I owe unto a man a hundred pounds; the day is expired, he will have his money; I have it not, and for lack of it I am laid in prison. In such distress comes a good friend, and saith, Sir, be of good cheer, I will pay thy debts; and forthwith payeth the whole sum, and setteth me at liberty. Such a friend is our Saviour; he has paid our debts, and set us at liberty; else we should have been damned world without end, in everlasting prison and darkness. Therefore, though our sins condemn us, yet when we allege Christ and believe in him, our sins shall not hurt us. For St. John saith, "We have an Advocate with God the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." Mark, that he saith an Advocate, not advocates: he speaketh in the singular, not in the plural.

We have one Advocate, not many; neither saints, nor any body else, but only Him, and no other, neither by the way of mediation, nor by the way of redemption. He only is sufficient, for he only is all the doer, let him have all the praise. Let us not withdraw from him his majesty, and give it to creatures, for he alone satisfies for the sins of the whole world. So that all who believe in Christ are clean from all the filthiness of their sins. For St. John Baptist saith, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world." (John i.) Does the devil call thee from prayer? Christ calls thee unto it again: for so it is written, "To this end the Son of God appeared, to destroy the works of the devil." (1 John iii.)

But mark here: Scripture speaks not of impenitent sinners; Christ suffered not for them; his death remedies not their sins. For they are the bondmen of the devil, and his slaves; and therefore Christ's benefits pertain not unto them. It is a wonderful saying that St. John has: "Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world." The devil saith unto me, Thou art a sinner.—Yea, saith St. John, but the Lamb of God hath taken away thy

sins. Also, "We, therefore, having a great High Priest, which passed through the heavens, even Jesus the Son of God, let us with boldness go unto the seat of his grace, that we may obtain mercy." (Heb. iv.) O, it is a comfortable thing that we have an access unto God! Isaiah saith, "The pain of our punishment was laid upon him, and with his stripes are we healed. (chap. liii.) Further, in the New Testament we read, "Unto the same bear all the prophets witness, that, they all do receive forgiveness of sins by his name, which believe on him." (Acts x.)

Now you see how you are remedied from your sins, you hear how you shall withstand the devil, when he will withdraw you from prayer. Let us, therefore, not give over prayer, but stick unto it; let us rather believe Christ our Saviour than the devil, who was a liar from the beginning. You know now how you may prevent him, how you may put him off, and avoid his temptations.

There is one other addition before we come to the petitions, which much confirms our faith, and increases the same; "Which art in heaven." These words show a difference between our heavenly Father and our temporal fathers. There are some temporal fathers who would fain help their children, but they are not able to help them. Again, there are some fathers who are rich, and might help their children, but they are so unnatural they will not help them. But our heavenly Father, in that we call him Father, we learn that he will help—that he bears a fatherly love towards us.

"In heaven:" Here we learn that he is able to help us, to give us all good things necessary to soul and body; and is mighty to defend us from all ill and peril. So it appears that he is a Father who will help, and that he, being celestial, is able to help us. Therefore we may have a boldness and confidence that he may help us; and that he will help us, where and whensoever we call. He saith, "I fill heaven and earth." And again, "Heaven is my seat, and the earth is my footstool." (Isa. lxvi.) Where we see that he is a mighty God; that he is in heaven and earth, with his power and might. In heaven he is apparent, where face to face he shows himself unto his angels and saints. In earth he is not so apparent, but darkly, and obscurely, he exhibits himself unto us; for our corrupt and feeble flesh could not bear his Majesty. Yet he fills the earth; that is

to say, he rules and governs the same, ordering all things according unto his will and pleasure. Therefore we must learn to persuade ourselves, and undoubtedly believe, that he is able to help: and that he bears a good and fatherly will towards us; that he will not forget us. Therefore the king and prophet David saith, "The Lord hath seen down from heaven." (Psal. liii.) As far as the earth is from the heaven, yet God looketh down, he seeth all things, he is in every place. He saith, The Lord hath looked down, not the saints. No, he saith not so: for the saints have not so sharp eyes to see down from heaven: they are purblind and sandblind, they cannot see so far, and have not so long ears to hear. And therefore our petition and prayer should be unto Him, who will hear and can hear. For it is the Lord that looketh down. He is here on earth, as I told you, very darkly; but he is in heaven most manifestly; where he shows himself unto his angels and saints face to face. We read in Scripture that Abel's blood cries unto God: (Gen. iv.) where it appears that he can hear, yea, not only hear, but also see and feel; for he seeth over all things, so that the least thought of our hearts is not hid from him.

Therefore ponder and consider these words well, for they fortify our faith. We call him "Father," to put ourselves in remembrance of his good-will towards us. "Heavenly" we call him, signifying his might and power, that he can help and do all things according to his will and pleasure. So it appears most manifestly that there lacketh neither good-will nor power in him.

There was once a prophet, who when he was ill entreated by King Joash, said, "The Lord look upon it, and requite it." (2 Chron. xxiv.) There are many men in England, and elsewhere, who care not for God, yea they are wholly without God; who say in their hearts, "Tush, the clouds cover him that he may not see, and he dwelleth above in heaven." (Job xxii.) But as I told you before, Abel's blood may certify his present knowledge. Let us therefore take heed that we do nothing that might displease his Majesty, neither openly nor secretly: for he is every where, and nothing can be hid from him. "He seeth, and will punish it."

Further, this word "Father," is not only apt and convenient for us to strengthen our faith withal, as I told you,

but also it moves God the sooner to hear us when we call him by that name, Father. For he, perceiving our confidence in him, cannot but show himself like a Father. So that this word Father, is most fit to move God to pity and to grant our requests. Certain it is, and proved by Holy Scripture, that God hath a fatherly and loving affection towards us, far passing the love of earthly parents to their children. Yea, as far as heaven and earth are asunder, so far his love towards mankind exceeds the love of earthly parents to their children; which love is set out by the mouth of his holy prophet Isaiah, where he saith, "Can a wife forget the child of her womb, and the son whom she has borne? And though she do forget him, yet will not I forget thee." (chap. xlix.) Here are shown the affections and unspeakable love, which God beareth towards us. He saith, "May a woman?" He speaks of the woman, meaning the man too; but because women most commonly are more affectionate towards their children than men, therefore he names the woman. And it is a very unnatural woman that hates or neglects her child. But what crafts and conveyances the devil uses, that he can bring his matters so to pass, that some women set aside not only all motherly affections, but also all natural humanity, insomuch that they kill their own children, their own blood and flesh!

Truth it is, there are some women very unnatural and unkind, who shall receive their punishment of God for it; but for all that, we ought to beware and not to believe every tale told unto us, and so judge rashly. I know what I mean. There have been lately such tales spread abroad and most untruly; such false tale-tellers shall have a grievous punishment of the Lord, when he shall come to reward every one according unto his deserts.

Here I have occasion to tell you a story which happened at Cambridge. Master Bilney, or rather Saint Bilney, who suffered death for God's word sake, the same Bilney was the instrument whereby God called me to knowledge; for I may thank him, next to God, for that knowledge which I have in the word of God. For I was as obstinate a papist as any in England, insomuch that when I should be made bachelor of divinity, my whole oration went against Philip Melancthon, and against his opinions. Bilney heard me at that time, and perceived that I was zealous without knowledge: and he came to me afterwards in my study, and desired me for God's sake to hear his confession. I did so;

and to say the truth, by his confession I learned more than before in many years. So from that time forward I began to smell the word of God, and forsook the school-doctors and such fooleries.

Now after I had been acquainted with him, I went with him to visit the prisoners in the tower at Cambridge, for he was ever visiting prisoners and sick folk. So we went together, and exhorted them as well as we were able to do; moving them to patience, and to acknowledge their faults. Among other prisoners, there was a woman who was accused that she had killed her own child, which act she plainly and steadfastly denied, and could not be brought to confess the act; which denying gave us occasion to search for the matter, and so we did. And at the length we found that her husband loved her not, and therefore he sought means to put her out of the way. The matter was thus: a child of hers had been sick by the space of a year, and so decayed as it were in a consumption. At the length it died in harvest time. She went to her neighbours and other friends to desire their help, to prepare the child to the burial; but there was nobody at home, every man was in the field. The woman, in heaviness and trouble of spirit, went, and being herself alone, prepared the child to the burial. Her husband coming home, not having great love towards her, accused her of murder, and so she was taken and brought to Cambridge. But as far forth as I could learn, through earnest inquisition, I thought in my conscience the woman was not guilty, all the circumstances well considered.

Immediately after this, I was called to preach before the king,* which was my first sermon that I made before his majesty, and it was done at Windsor; where his majesty after the sermon was done, talked with me most familiarly in a gallery. Now when I saw my time, I kneeled down before his majesty, opening the whole matter, and afterwards most humbly desired his majesty to pardon that woman. For I thought in my conscience she was not guilty; else I would not for all the world sue for a murderer. The king most graciously heard my humble request, insomuch that I had a pardon ready for her at my return homeward. In the mean season, that woman was delivered of a child in the tower at Cambridge, whose godfather I was, and Mistress Cheke was

* Henry VIII.

godmother. But all that time I hid my pardon, and told her nothing of it, only exhorting her to confess the truth. . . . . At length I showed her the king's pardon, and let her go.

This tale I told you by this occasion, that though some women are very unnatural, and forget their children, yet when we hear any body so report, we should not be too hasty in believing the tale, but rather suspend our judgment till we know the truth.

And again, we shall mark hereby the great love and loving kindness of God our loving Father, who shows himself so loving unto us, that notwithstanding women forget sometimes their own children, yet he will not forget us; he will hear us when we call upon him; as he saith by the evangelist Matthew, "Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you," &c. (chap. vii.) Then he brings in a pretty similitude, saying, "Is there any man amongst you, which if his son ask bread, will offer him a stone? If ye then, being evil, can give your children good gifts," &c. In these words where he saith, "which are evil," he gives us our own proper name, he paints us out, he pinches us, he cuts off our combs, he plucks down our stomachs. And here we learn to acknowledge ourselves to be wicked, and to know him to be the well-spring and fountain of all goodness, and that all good things come of him. Therefore let every man think lowly of himself, humble himself and call upon God, who is ready to give us, not only bread and drink, or other necessaries, but the Holy Ghost. To whom will he give the Holy Ghost? To lords and ladies, to gentlemen or gentlewomen? No, not so: he is not ruled by affections; he hath not respect unto personages: "Unto those which call upon him," saith he, being rich or poor, lords or knights, beggars or rich; he is ready to give unto them when they come to him. And this is a great comfort unto those who are poor and miserable in this world; for they may be assured of the help of God, yea, and as boldly go unto him, and desire his help, as the greatest king on earth. But we must ask, we must inquire for it; he would have us to be importunate, to be earnest and diligent in desiring, then we shall receive, when we come with a good faith and confidence. To whom shall we call? Not unto the saints. Those that call upon him shall be heard, saith

he. Therefore we ought to come to him only, and not unto the saints.

But one word is left, which we must needs consider; "Our," he saith not *my* but *Our;* wherefore saith he "Our?" This word "Our," teaches us to consider that the Father of heaven is a common Father, as well my neighbour's Father as mine; as well the poor man's Father as the rich. So that he is not a peculiar Father, but a Father to the whole church and congregation, to all the faithful, though they are ever so poor, so vile, so foul and despised; yet he is their Father as well as mine: and therefore I should not despise them, but consider that God is their Father as well as mine.

Here may we perceive what communion is between us; so that when I pray, I pray not for myself alone, but for all the rest. Again, when they pray, they pray not for themselves only, but for me: for Christ has so framed this prayer, that I must needs include my neighbour in it. Therefore, all those who pray this prayer, pray as well for me as for themselves; which is a great comfort to every faithful heart, when he considers that all the church pray for him. For amongst such a great number there are some who are good, and whose prayer God will hear. As it appears by Abraham's prayer, which prayer was so effectual, that God would have pardoned Sodom and Gomorrah, if he had found but ten good persons therein. (Gen. xviii.) Likewise St. Paul in shipwreck preserved his company by his prayer. (Acts xxvii.) So that it is a great comfort unto us to know that all good and faithful persons pray for us.

There are some learned men who gather out of Scripture that the prayer of St. Stephen was the occasion of the conversion of St. Paul. (Acts vii.) St. Chrysostom saith, that the prayer which I make for myself is the best, and is of more efficacy than that which is made in common.* Which saying I like not very well. For our Saviour was better learned than St. Chrysostom. He taught us to pray in common for all; therefore we ought to follow him, and be glad to pray one for another: for we have a common saying amongst us, Whosoever loveth me, loveth my hound. So, whosoever loveth God, will love his neighbour, which is made after the image of God.

And here is to be noted, that prayer has one property

* With others.

before all other good works: for with my alms I help but one or two at once, but with my faithful prayer I help all. I desire God to comfort all men living, but specially "those which are of the household of faith." Yet we ought to pray with all our hearts for others, who believe not, that God will turn their hearts and renew them with his Spirit; yea, our prayer reaches so far, that our very chief enemy ought not to be omitted.

Here you see what an excellent thing prayer is: when it proceeds from a faithful heart, it far passes all the good works that men can do.

Now to make an end, we are admonished here of charity, and taught, that God is not only a private Father, but a common Father unto the whole world, unto all the faithful: be they ever so poor and miserable in this world, yet he is their Father. Where we may learn humility and lowliness, specially great and rich men shall learn here not to be lofty or to despise the poor. For when ye despise the poor miserable man, whom despise ye? Ye despise him who calleth God his Father as well as you; and peradventure is more acceptable, and more regarded in his sight than you are. Those proud persons may learn here to leave their stubbornness and loftiness. But there are a great many who little regard this; they think themselves better than other men are, and so despise and contemn the poor; insomuch that they will not hear poor men's causes, nor defend them from wrong and the oppression of the rich and mighty. Such proud men despise the Lord's Prayer; they should be as careful for their brethren as for themselves. And such humility, such love and carefulness towards our neighbours, we learn by this word "Our." Therefore, I desire you on God's behalf, let us cast away all disdainfulness, all proudness, yea, and all bibble-babble.* Let us pray this prayer with understanding and great deliberation, not following the trade of monkery, which was wholly without devotion and understanding. There are but few who can say from the bottom of their hearts, "Our Father." Neither the Turks, nor the Jews, nor yet impenitent sinners, can call God their Father. Therefore it is but vain babbling whatsoever they pray: God hears them not, he will not receive their prayers. The promise of hearing is made unto them only who are faithful and believe in God, who endeavour themselves to live according to his

* Chattering, idle talking.

commandments. For Scripture saith, "The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears open unto their prayers." (Ps. xxxiii.)

But who are those righteous? Every penitent sinner who is sorry from the bottom of his heart for his wickedness, and believes that God will forgive him his sins, for his Son our Saviour Jesus Christ's sake. This is called in Scripture "a just man," that endeavours to leave all wickedness. In such sort Peter and Paul were just, because they repented, and believed in Christ, and so endeavoured to live according to God's laws. Therefore, as they were made just before God, so may we too; for we have the self-same promise. Let us therefore follow their example, let us forsake all sins and wickedness, then God will hear our prayers. For Scripture saith, "The Lord fulfilleth the desire of them that fear him: he also will hear their cry, and help them." (Ps. cxlv.) In another place he saith, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask what ye will, and it shall be done for you." So we see, that the promises pertain only to the faithful, to those who endeavour to live according to God's will and pleasure; who can be content to leave their wickedness, and follow godliness: those God will hear at all times, whensoever they shall call upon him.

Remember now what I have said; remember what is meant by this word "Our;" namely, that it admonishes us of love and charity, it teaches us to beware of stubbornness and proudness; considering that God loves the beggar as well as the rich man, for he regards no persons. Again, what is to be understood by this word "Father;" namely, that he bears a good will towards us, that he is ready and willing to help us. "Heavenly"—that admonishes us of his potency and ability, and that he is ruler over all things. This, I say; remember, and follow it; then we shall receive all things necessary for this life, and finally, everlasting joy and felicity. Amen. Let us pray, "Our Father," &c.

THE

SECOND SERMON

UPON

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATTHEW vi.

Hallowed be thy name.

THESE few words contain the first petition of the Lord's prayer: the other words which go before this, are an introduction unto these petitions; and they are like a preface, or learned entrance to the matter, that the petitions might be the sooner and with more favour heard. For our Saviour being a perfect instructor, teaches us, as a learned and an expert orator, how we should begin our prayer that we might be speedily heard, and how to get favour at God's hand.

I have a manner of teaching which is very tedious to those who are learned. I am wont to repeat those things which I have said before, which repetitions are not pleasant to the learned; but it is no matter, I care not for them; I seek more the profit of those who are ignorant, than to please learned men. Therefore I oftentimes repeat such things as are needful for them to know; for I would speak so that they might be edified withal.

I spake some things this day in commendation of this prayer: and first I told you, that it was our Saviour's own making, who is a perfect instructor, put in authority by God the heavenly Father himself, who said, "This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I have pleasure, hear him." (Matt. xvii.)

This prayer is a perfect prayer, an abridgment and compendious sum of all other prayers. There is nothing that we have need of, either to our souls or bodies, but it is contained in some of these petitions; nothing that God promises in his word to give us, but it is expressed in one of these seven petitions.

I showed you this day why we call God, Father; namely, because he bears a loving and fatherly heart toward us. It is a sweet word, "Father;" and a word that pleases God much when it is spoken with a faithful heart, which God requires above all things. This word Father moves God's affection in a manner towards us, so that he, hearing the word Father, cannot choose but show himself a Father indeed. So that it is a word profitable to us in God's behalf, and again for our ownselves. For it moves God to pity, and also helps our faith: so that we doubt not, but that we shall find him a Father, who will grant our requests and petitions made unto him in the name of Christ. Now what crafts and conveyances the devil uses to withdraw and hinder us from prayer, I told you to-day aforenoon. If you exercise prayers, you shall find the temptations of the devil, for he sleeps not: he ever tries to withdraw us from prayer. But I told you what remedy you should use against him; how you should strive against him; namely, with faith, believing that our Saviour has taken away our sins, so that they cannot hurt us. For they are no sins in the sight of God; for he hath taken away both the guiltiness of sins, and the pains and punishments which follow sins. Christ hath deserved that those who believe in him shall be quit from all their sins. These benefits of Christ are set out in Scripture in many places; and these are the weapons wherewith we must fight against the devil and his illusions; not with holy water; for I tell you, the devil is not afraid of holy water. It is Christ who has gotten the victory over him; it is he that vanquishes the serpent's head, and not holy water.

Further—in that we call him "Father," his will and fatherly affections are expressed; that we call him "heavenly Father," his might and power, and his omnipotence are expounded unto us. So that you perceive he is both loving and kind towards us; he bears a good-will, and also is able to help, able to defend us from all our enemies, spiritual and temporal. Therefore, let us put our trust and confidence in him; let us not despair of his help, seeing he is so loving, kind, and gentle, towards us, and then so mighty, that he has all things in his hands. This affection and love towards us, passeth all motherly affections. And of this I spake before, to-day. . . . .

Further, you have heard how the good-will of God towards us is set out by this word "Father," and his power

and omnipotency by this word "heavenly;" but I would have you to consider well this word "our;" for it is a great help unto us, and strengthens much our faith, so that we may be assured that every good man in the whole world will pray for us and with us, whilst we have one Father and one manner of prayer. And this word "our," puts us in remembrance that we are brethren in Christ: where we are admonished to despise no man, be he ever so miserable or poor; for we all have one Father, who hath made us all of one metal of earth. So that the highest prince in the world is made of earth as well as the poorest subject; and so shall turn into the same again, as well as the poorest shepherd. Let those proud persons mark this well, who are ever ready to despise every man. Such proud persons never say the Lord's prayer with a good mind; yea, God is not their Father: for he abhorreth all proudness. Therefore such stubborn fellows, when they will pray, they should not say, "Our Father which art in heaven;" but rather, Our father which art in hell. God is their father, as concerning their substance, for he gives them souls and bodies; but they make themselves members of the devil, contrary unto God's will and pleasure.

Therefore set aside all arrogancy and proudness, likewise all superstitious and hypocritical babbling, speaking many words to little purpose. As I heard say of some lawyers, who babble and prate, and pretend a great diligence and earnest desire to defend the poor man's cause; but in their hearts they are false, they seek money and nothing else; so that their hearts and mouths disagree. Let us, I say, not follow such lawyers, let us not make a show of holiness with much babbling, for God hath no pleasure in it; therefore away with it: yea, not alone with this, but with all that may hinder us in our prayer; set it aside, and come reverently to talk with God; like as when you go to the communion, you must be prepared for it, you must be in charity with your neighbour; so likewise, when you talk with God, and pray to him, you must be prepared.

Here you may perceive, that those persons who will not be corrected for their faults, who cannot bear godly admonitions, and never talk with God to his pleasure; they are not ruled by God's Spirit, and so not meet for him. All rebellious persons, all blood-thirsty persons, all covetous persons, all lecherous persons, all liars, drunkards, and such

like, are not in the case to talk with God. God will not hear them, he cannot abide them, they stink before his face, as long as they come before him with such abominable sins, not intending to leave them. Remember now what a doctrine is contained in this preface, weigh it; for it is better to say it sententiously one time, than to run it over a hundred times with humbling and mumbling.

Now when we have begun as we ought to do, what shall we desire? "Hallowed be thy name." Thy name "Father," be hallowed, sanctified, be magnified. What is this? What meant our Saviour when he commands us that we desire that God's name be hallowed? There are a great number of people who speak these words with their mouths, but not with their hearts, contrary to the saying, 'Whatever we ask for let us ask in earnest, as really desiring to have it.' But they say it without knowledge, therefore they say it not as they ought to do. "Thy name:" we require not that his name may be hallowed in him; for this is already done without our prayer: but we desire that he will give us grace, and assist us, that we in all our doings throughout our life may sanctify his name.

And here we are admonished again of love and charity; for when we say, "Hallowed be thy name," we ask in all men's names; where we may perceive what communion and fellowship there is between the faithful flock of God; for every faithful man and woman requires that the whole church may hallow and sanctify God's word.

What is it to be hallowed? We desire that the name of God may be revealed, opened, manifested, and credited throughout all the world. What is God's name? All that is spoken of him in Holy Scripture, that is his name. He is called, Gracious, Merciful, Righteous, a Punisher of wickedness, True, Almighty, Long-suffering, Patient, Hardy,* a Consuming Fire, the King over the whole earth, a Judge, a Saviour. These and such like are the names of God.† Now when I make my petition unto him, saying, "Hallowed be thy name;" I desire that his name may be revealed, that we may know what Scripture says of him, and believe it, and live after it. I do not desire that his name be hallowed of himself, for it needs not; he is

* Strong.

† What the name of God is, see Exod. xxxiv. Zech. ix. Rom. x. Jer. x. Joshua iv. Deut. iv. Psal. xlix. Nehem. ix. Exod. xx. Jer. l. Gen. xviii. Exod. xv. Psal. xviii. Psal. vii. Psal. xlvi. Isa. xii.

holy already. But I desire that he will give us his Spirit, that we may express him in all our doings, and conversations; so that it may appear by our deeds that God is even such a one indeed as Scripture reports him. We are tried many times whether his name be hallowed amongst us or not; he sends us trouble and adversities to prove us, whether we will hallow his name or not; but he finds us quite contrary. For some of us, when we are in trouble, run hither and thither to sorcerers and wizards to get remedy; some again swear and curse; but such fellows hallow not the name of God; God is "a sharp punisher," he will punish sin, and those who blaspheme his holy name.

I heard of late that there are some wicked persons, despisers of God and his benefits, who say, "It is no matter whatsoever we do; we are baptized; we cannot be damned; for all those that are baptized, and called Christians, shall be saved!" This is a false and wicked opinion; and I assure you that such as bear the name of Christians, and are baptized, but follow not God's commandments; that such fellows, I say, are worse than the Turks and heathen: for the Turks and heathen have made no promise unto Christ to serve him. These fellows have made promise in baptism to keep Christ's rule, which thing they do not; and therefore they are worse than the Turks. For they break their promise made before God, and the whole congregation. And therefore such Christians are most wicked, perjured persons; and not only are perjured, but they go about to make God a liar, so much as lieth in them.

There are some, again, who when they are in trouble call upon God; but he comes not by and by,* intending to prove their patience; they perceiving he comes not at the first call, give over by and by—they will no more call upon him. Do they believe now, think ye? Do they sanctify God's holy name? God promises in his holy word, "Every one that calleth or that desireth help of me shall have it." (Matt. vii.) Again, "Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will hear thee; and thou shalt praise me." Ps. l. Likewise St. Paul saith, "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye be able." (1 Cor. x.) Now when we give over prayer being in trouble, do we sanctify the name of God? No, no; we

* Directly.

slander and blaspheme his holy name; we make him a liar, as much as lieth in us. For he saith, "I will deliver thee, I will help thee." We will call no more; for we say, he will not help. So we make him and his word a liar. Therefore God saith to Moses and Aaron, "Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the sight of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them." (Num. xx.) Where it appears what it is to hallow God's name, that is, to believe his words, to show ourselves that he is true in his doings and sayings. He saith further, "Fear them not, neither be afraid of them, but sanctify the Lord of Hosts." (Isaiah viii.)

Here you see what it is to sanctify his name; that is, to believe that all things are true which are spoken of him; that is, to believe that our enemies are not able to go further than it pleases God. And so did the apostles when they suffered for God's sake, they believed that God would do with them according to his word and promise. And so they sanctified God; that is, they declared with their acts and deeds, that God is a true and faithful God. This did the martyrs of God; this did the three young men who would not worship the idol set up by the king, and therefore were cast into the burning oven, to which pain they were willing to go. "We know, said they, that God is able to help and defend us, when it pleases him." (Dan. iii.)

So must we likewise offer ourselves unto the cross, content to suffer whatsoever he shall lay upon us. We may call upon him, and desire his help; but we may not appoint unto him wise* and way, how he shall help, and by what means; neither may we appoint him any time, but only sanctify his name, that is, call upon him for deliverance, not doubting but when it is to his honour and our profit to be delivered, he will help. But if he help not, let us suffer death, happy are we; for then we are delivered from all trouble. And so these three young men sanctified the name of God; they believed that God was a helper: and so, according to their belief he helped them; marvellously showing his power, and defending them from the power of the fire.

Happy are those that suffer for God's sake. The prophet saith, "Commit thy way unto the Lord, and he shall bring

* The method.

it to pass;" (Ps. xxxvii.) that is to say, When thou art in trouble, call upon the Lord, believe in him; and if it be good for thee, he will deliver thee; so to sanctify God's name, is to believe in him. We ought to be at his pleasure; whensoever and whatsoever he will do with us we ought to be content withal. If we were earnest and zealous as we should be, O how hot we should be in promoting God's honour, and sanctifying his name! We neither should nor could suffer that any body should go about to dishonour the holy name of God. But we are very cold, we care not for his honour;—we ought to be patient in our own quarrel: when any body does us wrong, we ought to bear and forbear it; but in God's behalf we ought to be hot and earnest to defend his honour, as much as we are able to do. But it is quite contrary with us; for in our own quarrel we are as hot as coals; but in God's cause, for his honour, we care not; we regard it as nothing, whereas it ought most, above all, to be regarded; for God is just, righteous, faithful, and kind; and therefore we ought to take his part. But nothing makes more for the sanctifying of God's holy name, than to be thankful for such gifts as we receive at his hands.

And this hallowing standeth in all things that may make for the furtherance of God's honour. To hear God's word, and highly to esteem the same, is a hallowing of God's name. How do those hallow the name of God, who refuse to hear the word of God, or for lack of preachers cannot hear it? And how can they believe, when they hear it not? Therefore they that do somewhat for the furtherance of learning, for maintaining of schools and scholars, they sanctify God's holy name. As for those preachers who have been in my time, they go away. How shall now this office of preaching, the office of salvation, how shall it be maintained, except there is some provisions made for the same? Here I could say much against those who hinder that office, who withdraw the goods wherewith schools should be maintained, and take it to themselves; but my audience is not thereafter.* This office of preaching is the office of salvation; for St. Paul saith, "It hath pleased God to save the believers by the foolishness of preaching." (1 Cor. i.) How can they then believe, but by and through the office of preaching?

* Of that sort of persons.

Preachers are Christ's vicars: They are Christ's ambassadors. St. Paul saith, "The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, for every believer;" it is the mighty instrument of God.

When we say, "Hallowed be thy name," we desire God that he, through his goodness, will remove and put away all things that may hinder and stop the honour of his name. But I fear there are many who would not that it should be so. We desire that God will remove all infidelity and witchcrafts. . . . and that nothing be left but his holy word, wherewith we may daily praise the name of God. For I fear there are a great many in England who do what is to the dishonour of God and their own damnation. We require here further, that all heresy, all popery may be abolished and extinguished. Further we require here, that all wicked living may be amended and reformed. Next we require, that all magistrates may do their duties. Finally, we require, that every man in his vocation may do the work whereunto God hath called him.

There are many vocations: the magistrates' vocation is to see that the commonwealth is well ordered, to see that schools are maintained, to see that the universities are well furnished, to see that justice is executed, that the wicked are punished, and the good rewarded. In short, to keep every one in good order: this is their duty.

Further, we pray that the priests, the spirituality, or the churchmen, as they call them, do their duties, to preach God's word, to live godly, and give a good example by their conversation; else they do against the honour of God, and their own honesty. Likewise, we pray that servants may do their duties; for to be a servant is an honest state, and much commended in Scripture; and Scripture speaks much to the comfort of them. And truly, those who live in the fear of God, considering that they serve not only their earthly masters, but God himself, they are in good case; but they may not be eye-servants. St. Paul notes this fault, and saith, that they shall not be murmurers, nor froward answerers. St. Paul would have them to live so that they may adorn and sanctify the name of God. For the servant who does the thing whereunto he is called, he adorns his state; that servant is a good gospeller, who will not be an eye-servant. There are some servants, who do their duties as long as their master is in

sight; but as soon as their master is gone, they play the lubbers.* Unto such fellows I say, Beware; for though your bodily master see you not, yet your great Master, God, seeth you, and will punish you. "What thou doest, do it from the bottom of thy heart," (Col. iii.) with a good will; go not away with the devil's paternoster, as some do: do all things with a good mind. For I tell you, you are not forgotten in Scripture; you are much commended in the same. St. Paul speaks very honourably of you, saying, "You serve the Lord Christ:" it becomes not you to differ about what business you are commanded to do. For whatsoever it is, do it with a good will, and it is God's service. Therefore you ought to do it, in respect that God would have you to do so; for I am no more assured in my preaching that I serve God, than the servant is in doing such business as he is commanded to do; scouring the candlesticks, or whatsoever it be. Therefore, for God's sake, consider the matter. Some of you think, if Christ were here, you would go with him and serve him. I tell you, when you follow your service, and do such things as your master and mistress shall command you, you serve Christ as well as if he were here bodily. He is not here bodily now, but his word is here. "You serve the Lord Christ," saith St. Paul. Therefore I desire you in God's behalf, to walk uprightly and godly. Consider what God saith unto you; "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently." (Jer. xlviii.) This Scripture pertains to you as well as to me. For when you do your business negligently, you are cursed before the face of God. Therefore consider the goodness of God, that he would have you saved as well as your masters. Surely, methinks it is a great benefit of God, to be a servant. For those who keep houses, must make account before God for their family; must watch and see that all things are well. But a servant when he can discern what stands with God's commandment, and what is against it, it is enough for him; but he must know that he ought not to obey his master or mistress when they would command him to do against God; in such a case he may refuse and withstand them. For it is written, "We must obey unto God more than man:" (Acts v.) we should not do against God, to please our masters. Again, masters and mistresses are bound to consider their duties, to pay unto

* Idle fellows.

their servants their wages, and meat and drink convenient. For it is a great sin to defraud the labourer of his wages; for it is written, "The cry of the labourers shall come before the Lord;" it is a great fault before God to defraud them. But there are some servants who are so wicked, that they will complain without a cause, when they cannot have that which they desire to have, nor bear all the rule themselves. But I say, it is a great thing for a master to defraud his servant; and again, the servant who has his whole wages, and does but half his work, or is a sluggard, that same fellow, I say, is a thief before God. For like as the master ought to pay the whole wages, so likewise the servant ought to do his whole work.

Here I might have occasion to show how man and wife ought to live together, how they ought to be faithful, loving, and friendly one to the other; how the man ought not to despise the wife, considering that she is partaker with him of everlasting life. Therefore the man ought "to dwell with her." Again, see how the woman ought to behave herself towards her husband, how faithful she ought to be. Now when they both yield their duties the one to the other, then they sanctify the name of God; but when they do contrary to their calling, then they slander the holy name of God. Therefore let every man and woman walk in their vocations.

We must have a good and earnest mind and will to sanctify the name of God; for the person that prayeth, and desires of God that His name may be hallowed, and yet has no will or pleasure to do it indeed, does not rightly sanctify the name of God. St. Peter teaches us how we shall sanctify God's name, saying, "Have a good and holy conversation, live uprightly in your calling; so that your light may so shine before men that they may see your good works, and so glorify God."

I will trouble you no longer; a little well perceived and borne away, is better than a great deal heard and left behind. Consider wherefore our Saviour commands us to call God "Our Father:" then afterward weigh this, "which art in heaven." Then come to the petition; "Hallowed be thy name;" weigh and consider this. For now is the time wherein the name of God should be hallowed: for it is a pitiful thing to see what rule and dominion the devil bears, how shameless men are; how the name of God is brought into derision. Therefore let us say from the bottom of our

heart, "hallowed;" that is to say, Lord God, through thy goodness remove all wickedness; give us grace to live uprightly. And so consider every word: one word spoken with good affection is better than a hundred without it. Yet I do not say this to hinder you from saying the whole *Paternoster;* but I say, one word well said, is better than a great many else. Read throughout all the Scripture, and you will find that all faithful men have made but short prayers; Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Hezekiah: and our Saviour himself in the garden saith, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." (Matt. xxvi.) This was but a short prayer.

So likewise St. Stephen saith, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." The publican praying in the temple made but a short prayer; saying, "Lord, be merciful unto me a sinner." (Luke xviii.) So the thief hanging upon the cross saith, "Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom." (Luke xxiii.) Here was not much babbling. But I speak not this to dissuade you from long prayer, when the spirit and the affections serve; for our Saviour himself spent whole nights in prayer.

"Hallowed be thy name;" that is to say, Lord, remove away thy dishonour, remove away sin, move them that are in authority to do their duties, move the man and wife to live rightly, move servants to do well. And so it should be a great grief unto us when we see any body dishonour the name of God, insomuch that we should cry out, "Our Father, hallowed be thy name." This one thing bear away with you above all others; consider that when we will come to God and talk with him, we must be penitent sinners, we must abhor sins, purpose to leave them, and to live uprightly; which grant us, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

THE

THIRD SERMON

UPON

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATTHEW vi.

Thy kingdom come.

THIS is the second petition of the Lord's prayer. I trust you have not forgotten your two lessons before rehearsed unto you. First, the beginning of the Lord's prayer, what a treasure of doctrine is contained in every word. "Our," what it signifies. "Father," what it means; and then this addition, "which art in heaven." How many things are to be noted by every one of those words: and I trust also you have remembered the contents of the first petition, "Hallowed be thy name." Here I told you wherein standeth the holiness of his name, and what it means, namely, we require that his name may be sanctified in us, that is to say, we require that all our conversation may be to the honour of God, which follows when we endeavour ourselves to do his pleasure, when we hear his word with great diligence and earnest reverence, and so walk in the works of our vocation, every man whereunto God hath appointed him. And because the word of God is the instrument and fountain of all good things, we pray to God for the continuance of his word, that he would send godly and learned men amongst us, who may be able to declare to us his will and pleasure. So that we may glorify him in the hour of our visitation, when God shall visit us, and reward every one according unto his desert.

One thing we must well consider and not forget, namely, that our Saviour teaches us to pray and desire of God that

his name may be hallowed. Where he paints us in our own colours, and would have us to confess our own imperfections, that we are not able to do any thing according to God's will, except we receive it first at his hands. Therefore he teaches us to pray, that God would make us able to do all things according to his will and pleasure.

This is our request, "Thy kingdom come:" Thou Father, we beseech thee, let thy kingdom come to us. Here we pray that the kingdom of God come not to one only, but to us all. So that when I say this prayer, I beseech God that he will let his kingdom come to you as well as to me. Again, when you pray, you pray as well for me as for your ownselves. "Let thy kingdom come." You must understand that, to speak properly, these words are not to be understood of God's inferior kingdom; of his earthly kingdom, as though it hung upon our petitions, so that he could not be lord and ruler over the earth, except we pray for him. No; we pray not for his inferior kingdom to come, for it is come already: he rules and governs all things. He is called in Scripture, "The King above all kings," "the Lord above all lords." (1 Tim. vi.) Therefore he rules and governs all things according to his will and pleasure, as Scripture saith, "Who will withstand his will?" (Rom. ix.)

So our Saviour reports; saying, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work also:" (John v.) What worketh he? He worketh the works of governance. For at the first beginning he created all things. But he left them not so. He assists them, he rules them according to his will. Therefore our Saviour does not teach us to pray for his worldly kingdom to come; for he rules already as Lord and King, yea, and all the kings and rulers rule by him, by his permission, as Scripture witnesses; "Through me, that is by my permission, kings reign." (Prov. viii.) I would wish of God that all kings and potentates in the world would consider this well, and so endeavour themselves to use their power to the honour and glory of God, and not presume on their own strength. For this is a good admonition for them, when God saith, "through me kings do reign:" yea, they are so under God's rule, that they can think nothing nor do any thing without God's permission. For it is written, "The heart of the king is in the hand of the Lord, and he turneth the same whithersoever it pleaseth him." (Prov. xxi.) This is good to be considered, and specially sub-

jects should mark this text well—when the rulers are hard, and oppress the people, think ever, "The king's heart is in the governance of God." Yea, when you are led to prison, consider that the governor's heart is in the hand of the Lord. Therefore yield obedience, make your moan unto God, and he will help, and can help. Surely I think there is no place in Scripture more pleasant than this: "The heart of the king is in the hand of God;" for it makes us sure, that no man can hurt us without the permission of God our heavenly Father. For all those great rulers that have been from the beginning of the world till now, have been set up by the appointment of God; and he pulled them down when it pleased him.

There have been principally four monarchies in the world; the first, the Babylonians, who had great and many nations underneath them: which was God's ordinance and pleasure, for he suffered them so to do.

After them came the Persians, who were great rulers and mighty kings, as appears by histories written by learned men at that time.

Then came the Greeks and took the dominion from the Persians, and ruled themselves for a while, till they were plucked down.

At the last came the Romans with their empire, which shall be the last:* and therefore it is a token that the end of the world is not far off. But wherefore were those mighty potentates plucked down? Marry, for wickedness' sake. The Babylonians, Persians, and Grecians, (and a good part of the Romans) were cast down for wickedness' sake. What were their doings? They would not execute justice; the magistrates were wicked, lofty, and high-minded: the subjects, taking example from their magistrates, were wicked too, and so they deserved to be punished together. Therefore the wisdom of God saith, "In the place where poor men ought to be heard, there have I seen impiety; I have seen oppression and extortion; this I have seen. Yea, and in the place of justice, there I have seen bearing and bolstering."† (Eccles. iii.) So for these causes these great empires were destroyed: so

* The Roman empire was divided into ten parts, among which were the principal divisions of Europe which have since existed. See Rev. xiii. 1. xvii. 12.

† Partiality and favouring.

shall we, if we follow their wicked examples. Isaiah, that hearty prophet, confirmeth the same, saying, "I looked they should execute justice, defend the good, and punish the ill: but there was nothing but crying." This is a great matter, "The cry of the people:" when subjects are oppressed, so that they cry unto God for deliverance, truly God will hear them; he will help and deliver them. But it is to be pitied, that the devil bears so much rule, and so much prevails both in magistrates and subjects, insomuch that he bears almost all the rule. Not that he ought to do so; for God is the lawful ruler of the world; unto him we owe obedience; but the devil is a usurper; he comes to his dominion by craft and subtlety, and so makes himself the great ruler over the world. Now, he being the great ruler would have all the other rulers to go after him, and follow his example, which commonly happens so. For you know there is a common saying, Like to like. Therefore he uses all homely tricks to make all rulers to go after him: yea, he seeks to inveigle even kings, and to make them negligent in their business and office. Therefore such kings and potentates were pulled down, because they followed the instructions of the devil.

But our Saviour speaks not of such worldly kingdoms, when he teaches us to say, "Thy kingdom come." For these worldly kingdoms bring us not to worldly felicity: they are full of all manner of calamities and miseries, death, perditions, and destructions. Therefore the kingdom that he speaks of, is a spiritual kingdom; a kingdom where God alone bears the rule, and not the devil. This kingdom is spoken of every where in Scripture, and was revealed long ago; and daily God has his preachers, who bring us to the knowledge of this kingdom. Now we pray here that the kingdom of God may be increased, for it is God's fellowship, they are God's subjects who dwell in that kingdom; which kingdom consists in righteousness and justice, and it delivers from all calamities, and miseries, from death and all peril.

And in this petition we pray that God will send unto us his Spirit, who is the leader unto this kingdom; and all those which lack this Spirit shall never come to God. For St. Paul says, "Whosoever hath not the Spirit of Christ, he pertaineth not unto him." (Rom. viii.) Likewise our Saviour says, "The kingdom of God is within you." Signifying that those who have the Spirit of God shall be sure

of that kingdom: yea, it begins here in this world with the faithful.

The instrument wherewith we are called to this kingdom is the office of preaching. God calls us daily by preachers to come to this kingdom, to forsake the kingdom of the devil, to leave all wickedness. For customable* sinners, those that are not content to leave sin, they pertain not to that kingdom; they are under the dominion of the devil, he rules them: like as our Saviour saith to the Jews, "The devil is your father." Also, "He that doth sin is of the devil." Therefore by this petition we pray, that we may be delivered from all sin and wickedness, from the devil and his power. We desire God that we may be his subjects, which is a very godly and needful prayer.

Further, by this petition we are put in remembrance what we are, namely, captives of the devil, his prisoners, and bondmen, and not able to come to liberty through our own power. Therefore we desire God's help and aid, as Christ hath taught us to call him Father: he knew his affections, therefore he commands us to call him Father, and to desire his help to be delivered out of the kingdom of the devil. Happy are those who are in this kingdom, for they shall lack nothing; and this kingdom comes to us by preaching; by hearing of God's word. Therefore those who send scholars to school, they are helpers and furtherers toward this kingdom; and truly it is needful that there be made some provision for them. For except schools and universities are maintained we shall have no preachers: when we have no preachers, when we have none which show unto us God's word, how shall we come to that blessed kingdom which we desire? What avails it when you have gotten many hundred pounds for your children, and lack God's word? Therefore, I say, this office must needs be maintained: for it is a necessary office, which furthers this kingdom; of which our Saviour speaks in the gospel to the Jews, saying, "The kingdom of God is come near." (Luke x.) Likewise he said to one, "Follow me, and preach the kingdom of God." So ought all preachers to do, they ought to allure every man to come to this kingdom, that this kingdom may be replenished. For the more there are converted, the more is the kingdom of God increased. Again, those that

* Habitual.

are wicked livers help to multiply the kingdom of the devil.

To this heavenly kingdom our Saviour exhorts us, saying, "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all other things shall come upon you unlooked for." "Cast all thy care upon God," as David saith. Then our principal study shall be to hear God's word, and when we have heard it we shall believe it, and follow it, every man in his vocation. Then servants shall yield their obedience to their masters, as God requires of them. Then the parents shall bring up their children in the fear of God; then the children shall be obedient to their parents; then subjects shall be obedient to their king and prince, and all his officers under him. So go throughout all states; every one shall live uprightly in his calling. Then God will bless us, so that we shall not lack necessaries in this world; and then, at the end, we shall come to that perfect felicity and joy that God has laid up and prepared for them that study to live here according to his will and commandment. But we must labour and travail—as long as we are in this world we must be occupied. For St. Paul saith, "Whosoever will not labour, let him not eat," (2 Thess. iii.) Likewise David saith, "Thou shalt eat the labours of thy hand, and it shall go well with thee," (Psal. cxxvii.) For he that will labour, and is content to travail for his living, God will prosper him, he shall not lack. Let every man, therefore, labour in his calling; for so did our Saviour himself, who came into this world to teach us the way to heaven, and to suffer death for us. Now how diligent he has been in his office appears every where. For the evangelist saith, "He talked with them of the kingdom of God." Mark here, he taught them of the kingdom of God, he taught them nothing of the kingdom of this world. For he saith, standing before Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world," (John xviii.) He reigneth by faith through his Holy Spirit, in all those who pertain unto him. He is not an earthly king, as the Jews hope to have their Messias.

Therefore, when I feel such motions within me then it is time to call upon God, for such motions come of the devil: therefore I must run to God, saying, "Thy kingdom come, most loving Father; help thou; fight thou for me against my enemies, suffer me not to be taken prisoner: let not my enemies have the victory over me." So

we must call upon God without intermission. For you may be sure we shall never be without battle and travail, and we are not able to withstand our adversary by our own power. Therefore, it is most needful for us to call and cry unto him for help: when we do so, then we shall have grace to withstand the devil; for he cannot, neither is he able to strive with God, notwithstanding all his craft. For the Scripture saith, "No wisdom, no craft can prevail against the Lord." (Prov. xxi.) He will help and deliver us when he sees his time; for commonly the nature of God is to help when all man's help is past. When the devil thinks himself quite sure, then God comes and subverts his wicked intents; as it appeared in our Saviour himself; for when the devil had brought the Jews to such a madness that they went and crucified him—when this was done, the devil triumphed and made merry; he thought himself sure enough of him. But what was the end of it? Satan's triumphing was turned to his own destruction. For Christ hanging upon the cross, did by his death destroy the power of the devil. So we see how God suffers the devil for a while, and then when he sees his time, he comes with his gracious helping hand. But, as I told you before, the devil has many inventions, many impediments and hinderances, wherewith he entraps us. For we see there are a great many gospellers who began very well and godly, but now the most part of them are become ambitious and covetous persons; all the world is full of such fellows.

But what then? God will preserve his kingdom; he will wrestle with the devil's kingdom, and so shall prevail and pull it down to the bottom. Therefore all those who are in the kingdom of God must wrestle, strive, and fight with the devil: not as the carnal gospellers do, who commonly begin well at the first, but now having rest and tranquillity, and all things going with them, they leave the gospel, and set their minds upon this naughty world. Therefore it is good and needful for us to have afflictions and exercises; for, as St. Augustine saith, "The blood of the Christians is as it were the seed of the fruit of the gospel." For when one is hanged here, and another yonder, then God goeth a sowing of his seed. For like as the corn that is cast into the ground rises up again, and is multiplied; even so the blood of one of those who suffer for God's holy word's sake stirs up a great many; and happy is he

to whom it is given to suffer for God's holy word's sake. For it is the greatest promotion that a man can have in this world, to die for God's sake, or to be despised and contemned for his sake: for they shall be well rewarded for their pains and labours, "Your reward, saith our Saviour, shall be great in heaven." (Matt. v.)

Further, when we pray, "Thy kingdom come," we desire of God that more and more may come to the knowledge of God's word. And secondly, we desire of God to bring those who are come already, to the perfect knowledge of his word, and so to keep them in it still to the very end; for not he that beginneth, but he that endureth shall be saved.

This kingdom of God is twofold, "the kingdom of grace, and the kingdom of glory, honour, joy, and felicity." As long as we are in this world, we are in the kingdom of grace; and when we are gone, then we shall come to the kingdom of glory. For as long as we are here, God shows himself unto us by grace; he ascertains us, through his Spirit, of his favour, and so he reigns within us by grace. But when we are once gone, then we shall see him face to face; which we cannot, as long as we are here. For he exhibits himself unto us, not so plainly as he does unto his angels, who are with him in the kingdom of glory. Therefore, when we say, "Thy kingdom come," we desire of God that he will help us to this perfect kingdom, that he will deliver us out of this troublous world, and give us everlasting rest.

I fear there are a great number in England, who if they knew what they meant in speaking these words, "Thy kingdom come," they would never say them. For they are so given to the world, and so set their minds upon it, that they could be content that there should never be any end of it. Such worldlings, when they say these words, "Thy kingdom come," pray against themselves: for they desire God to take them out of this world speedily, and yet they have all their delight in it. Therefore such worldlings when they say, "Thy kingdom come," either mock God, or else they understand not the meaning of these words. But we ought not to trifle with God; we should not mock him; he will not be despised. "Let us pray heartily unto him, desirous to have the thing wherefor we pray. But the customable impenitent sinner cannot say, from the bottom of his heart, this prayer; for he would have no

end of this worldly life, he would have his heaven here. Such fellows are not meet to say, "Thy kingdom come;" for when they do, they pray against themselves. Therefore none can say this petition, but such as are weary of this world; such faithful folk would have him come speedily, and make an end of their miseries. It is with the Christians, as it is in a realm where there is confusion, and no good order; those who are good would fain have a parliament; for then they think it shall be better with them, they trust all things shall be well amended.

Sometimes the counsels are good, but the constitutions please not the wicked, and so they begin to cry out as fast as they did before. Sometimes the counsels are naught, then the good people cry out; and so they never are at rest. But there is one parliament that will remedy all the matters, be they ever so weighty or heavy, it will despatch them clean. And this parliament will be sufficient for all realms of the whole world,—it is the last day, where our Saviour himself will bear the rule. There nothing shall be done amiss, I warrant you; but every one as he hath deserved so he shall have: the wicked shall have hell, the good shall possess heaven. Now this is what we pray for when we say, "Thy kingdom come:" and truly the faithful penitent sinners, desire that parliament, even from the bottom of their hearts. For they know that therein reformation of all things shall be had; they know that it shall be well with them in that day: and therefore they say from the bottom of their hearts, "Thy kingdom come." They know that there shall be a great difference between the parliament that Christ shall keep, and the parliaments of this world. For in this world this is the common rule, "The more wicked, the better luck." Which is a wonderful thing to consider how it comes to pass, that for the most part wicked bodies have the best luck: they are in wealth and health; insomuch that a man may much marvel at it; as Ezra, David, and others did: specially considering that God curseth them in his laws, and threateneth them that they shall have none of his benefits: "If thou wilt not hear the voice of the Lord thy God, thou shalt be cursed in the field," &c.

These are the words of God, which he speaks against the wicked, and it must needs be so, but yet we see by experience daily the contrary. Wherefore doth God suffer the wicked to subvert his order? The order is, that those

which do well, shall receive good things at God's hand, they shall be blessed, and all things shall go well with them. Now, how chances it that we see daily the wicked are blessed of God—they have and possess his benefits, and the good are cursed, which is a wonderful thing.

God the Almighty, who is most true, yea the truth itself, does it not without a cause. One cause is, that it is his pleasure to show his benefits as well unto the wicked as to the good. For he lets them have their pastime here, as it is written, "He letteth his sun shine, as well over the wicked as over the good." (Matt. v.) And I tell you this is for the exercise of those who serve God with godly living; they are promised, that it shall go well with them, and yet have they all the ill. This makes them to think that there is another world, wherein they shall be rewarded; and so gives them occasion to hawk and hunt for the other world;* whereas otherwise they would forget God, if they should have all things according to their hearts' desire, as the wicked have; who in very deed forget God, their minds being so occupied with other business, that they can have no leisure to inquire for God or his kingdom. Again, he suffers them to turn his order, to the intent that they may be brought to repentance, when they see his great goodness showed unto them, in that notwithstanding all their wickedness, he suffers them to enjoy the good things of the world. And so by his benefits he would give them occasion to leave sin and wickedness. As St. Paul saith, "The goodness of God allureth us to amendment of our life," but when they will not amend, then "they heap up to themselves the wrath of God in the day of wrath."

Now you have heard the causes wherefore God suffers the wicked to enjoy his gifts. But I would will and desire you most heartily, for God's sake, to consider that the judgment of God at the latter day shall be right, according unto justice: it will then appear who hath been good or bad. And this is the only comfort of all Christian people, that they know that they shall be delivered from all their troubles and vexations. Let us therefore have a desire that this day may come quickly; let us hasten God forward; let us cry unto him day and night, "Most merciful Father, thy kingdom come." St. Paul saith, "The Lord will not come till the swerving from faith cometh;" which thing is

* Make that the great object of their lives, and their chief pursuit.

already done and past: Antichrist is known throughout all the world. Wherefore the day is not far off. Let us beware, for it will one day fall upon our heads. St. Peter saith, "The end of all things draweth very near." If St. Peter said so at his time, how much more shall we say so? For it is a long time since St. Peter spake these words. . .

All those excellent learned men, whom without doubt God has sent into this world in these latter days to give the world warning, all those men do gather out of Scripture that the last day cannot be far off.* And this is most certain and sure, that whensoever he cometh, he cometh not too soon. If he come this night, or to-morrow, he cometh not too early. Therefore, good people, let us make ready towards his coming. And though he come not at this time, yet let us make ready; for we are not sure when we shall be called to make account before the Lord. All good and godly people since the world began endeavoured to make themselves ready towards this day. But, O Lord, how wretched and miserable, yea, and how careless we are! Therefore it will be like as he saith, "When they say, All things are well and quiet, then they shall be suddenly taken, and perish;" like as that rich glutton did: he ate and drank, he builded a new barn, for the old was too little for him; then he said to himself, "Now my soul, now be merry and take thy pleasure; for thou hast riches enough for many years." But what said God? What said he? "Thou fool, this night they will fetch thy soul from thee; whose shall those riches be then which thou hast heaped up?" And so shall all those be taken and trapped like this glutton, who will not make ready, who refuse the warnings of God; they shall be taken suddenly to their everlasting woe. For Scripture giveth warning unto every one, saying, "Like as in the days of Noah they will eat and drink, and marry," &c. To eat and to drink, and marry, is godly and lawful; but to do it otherwise than God hath commanded, is wicked and damnable. To eat without thanksgiving, or to eat either man's flesh,† or to play the glutton, more than suffices nature, this is wicked. To marry upon other respects than God hath appointed, and expressed in his most holy laws, is wicked and damnable; else "Marriage is honour-

* The reformers both on the continent and in England generally supposed the day of judgment was at hand.

† He eats other men's flesh that oppresses other men to maintain his own delicious diet.

able amongst all men," but to marry for wantonness' sake, that is wicked. "The sons of God saw the daughters of men." This did Noah rebuke in his time, but they laughed at it; he prepared the ark, and went into it; at length the flood fell upon their heads. "As in the days of Lot:" what did they? "Thou art come hither a stranger," said they; regarding nothing God's word, which was showed unto them through that good man Lot; they were wicked, whoremongers, drunkards, covetous persons. But what follows—what follows, I say? Consider the end: "The fire from heaven fell upon them suddenly and consumed them all." But we are not in darkness. We have the word of God, we know what is his will; therefore let us watch, for he will come like a thief in the night; happy are we if he shall find us watching.

This is the effect of this petition, wherein we desire that God will send down faith from heaven, that he will continue in me my faith, and every man's, so that we may be ready to go with him when his kingdom shall come.

Now as many as pertain to this kingdom of God, shall have one property amongst other things; they shall have an earnest mind and steadfast purpose to leave sin, according to St. Paul's saying, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies." God's kingdom shall reign in us, and not the devil's. Therefore when the devil tempts thee, withstand him; give not over, let him not get the victory: as for example; when thou seest a fair woman, an ill desire rises up in thy heart towards her: this lust is of the devil; call therefore for help, let him not occupy thy heart; then surely God will help, for he hath promised. "There is no condemnation to such as are in Christ Jesus;" when we do not allow sin nor agree unto it. Therefore dispose yourselves so to live according unto his will; who can and will preserve us from the devil, and bring us into his kingdom: which grant us, O God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

THE

FOURTH SERMON

UPON

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATTHEW vi.

Thy will be done.

AFTER this form our Saviour, a perfect instructor, taught Christian people to pray, "Our Father, which art in heaven; thy will be done." And here he teaches us two things, as he did in the other petitions. First, he teaches us to understand what we are of ourselves; namely, nothing at all, not able to do any thing pleasant to God; and so he plucketh us down, cutteth off our combs, and bringeth us low, who else would be proud, as though we could do somewhat that we cannot do indeed; like as those merit-mongers do, who esteem themselves after their merits, and think themselves perfect; so that their works shall not only help themselves, but also others: therefore they undertake to sell them for money.

These fellows know not themselves, and therefore they do contrary to this petition. Where our Saviour teaches us, that we can do nothing of ourselves; they, contrary to that petition, will do all things alone, and with their merits bring to pass all matters. But our Saviour, contrary to that, teaches us two things in this petition. First, he pulls down our stomachs and teaches us to know ourselves. Secondly, he shows us what we should do; namely, call upon God our heavenly Father, that he will help us, that we may be able to do his will; for of our own selves we are not able to do any thing acceptable unto him. And this is a good doctrine, which admonishes us to give all

praise unto God, and not to ascribe it to our own selves; for so did St. Paul when he said, "I am able to do all things that pertain to God's honour and glory, through him that strengtheneth me:" he said not, through mine own self; but through God who helpeth me. And here appears the right humiliation, and lowliness, which our Saviour teaches us in this petition. For he would have us know our own impossibility and unableness to do any thing; and then, again, he would have us call for aid and help to God; therefore he teaches us to say, "Thy kingdom come." So that though we are not able through our ownselves to do any thing, yet when we call upon him he will help. For Christ knew his Father's will and loving affections towards us; he knew that he would help us, for he was a perfect teacher; else he would not have commanded us to pray, "Thy will be done." Here we must understand, that the will of God is to be considered after two sorts. First, as it is omnipotent, unsearchable, and that it cannot be known unto us. Now we do not pray that his will so considered should be done. For his will, so considered, is and ever shall be fulfilled, though we should say nay to it. For nothing, either in heaven or in earth, is able to withstand his will. Wherefore it were but folly for us to desire to have it fulfilled, otherwise than to show thereby that we consent to his will, which is to us unsearchable.

But there is another consideration of God's holy will; and in that consideration, we and all faithful Christians desire that it may be done: and so considered, it is called a revealed, a manifested, and a declared will; and it is opened unto us in the Bible, in the New and Old Testament—there God has revealed a certain will; therefore we pray that it may be done, and fulfilled of us. This will was opened by Moses and the holy prophets, and afterwards by our Saviour himself and his apostles, whom he left behind him that they should instruct the world and teach them his will: which apostles have done according to their Master's commandment; for they not only spake it, but also wrote it, that it should remain to the world's end. And truly we are much bound to God, that he has set out this his will in our natural mother tongue, in English, I say, so that now you may not only hear it, but also read it yourselves; which is a great comfort to every Christian heart. For now you can no more be deceived, as you have been in times past, when we told you that popery

was the word of God; which falsehood we could not have brought to pass, if the word of God, the Bible, had been abroad in the common tongue. For then you might have perceived yourselves our falsehood and blindness. This I speak to move you to thankfulness towards him, who so lovingly provides all things necessary to our salvation.

Now to the matter: Almighty God, I say, set out his will by Moses and his prophets, and this will is contained in certain laws, which laws God commands that we should ever keep before our eyes, and look upon them as in a glass, and so learn to order our lives accordingly. And in case a man swerve from the same, and so fall into the danger of damnation, God revealed further his will how to remedy the matter, namely, by repentance and faith; so that whosoever from the bottom of his heart is sorry for his sins, and studies to leave them and to live uprightly, and then believes in our Saviour, confessing that he came into this world to make amends for our sins; this man or woman shall not perish, but have forgiveness of sins, and so obtain everlasting life. And this will God reveals specially in the New Testament, where our Saviour saith, "Whosoever believeth in me hath everlasting life;" where we learn that our Saviour is ordained of God to bring us to heaven, else we should have been all condemned, world without end. So that in this prayer, when we say, "Thy will be done," we desire of God that he will help and strengthen us, so that we may keep his holy laws and commandments. And then again we desire of him, that he will endue us with the gift of faith, so that we may believe that all those things which we do contrary to his laws, shall be pardoned and forgiven unto us through his Son, for his passion's* sake. And further, we desire him that he would fortify and strengthen us, that we may withstand the devil's will and our own, which fight against God's will. So that we may be able to bear all tribulations and afflictions willingly and patiently, for his sake. This is the simple meaning of this petition, when we say, "Thy will be done." I will go a little further, and show you somewhat more of it; yet I intend not to tarry long, for I am not very well at ease this morning, therefore I will make it short.

I have said now many times, and I say it yet again, Whatsoever we desire of God, let us desire it from the

* Sufferings.

bottom of our hearts: but I fear there are many who say this prayer, and yet cannot tell what they say, or at least their hearts are contrary disposed unto it. Such people I exhort on God's behalf to consider their duties, to consider that God will not be mocked, he will not be derided. We laugh God to scorn when we say one thing with our mouths, and think another thing with our hearts. Take this for an example.

Our rebels which rose about two years ago in Norfolk and Devonshire, considered not this petition: they said it with their lips only, but not with their hearts. Almighty God has revealed his will concerning magistrates, how he will have them to be honoured and obeyed. They were utterly bent against it: he revealed his will in many places of the Scripture; but specially by St. Peter, where he saith thus much in effect, "Be ye subject to all the common laws made by men of authority;" by the king's majesty, and his most honourable council, or by a common parliament; be subject unto them, obey them, saith God. And here is but one exception, and that is against God, that is, when laws are made against God and his word; then I ought to obey God more than man. Then I may refuse to obey, with a good conscience; yet, for all that, I may not rise up against the magistrates, nor make any uproar; for if I do so, I sin damnably: I must be content to suffer whatsoever God shall lay upon me, yet I may not obey their wicked laws to do them. Only in such a case men may refuse to obey, else in all the other matters we ought to obey. What laws soever they make concerning outward things we ought to obey, and in nowise to rebel, although they are ever so hard, noisome, and hurtful; our duty is to obey, and commit all the matters unto God, not doubting but that God will punish them, when they do contrary to their office and calling. Therefore tarry till God correct them; we may not take upon us to reform them, for it is no part of our duty. If the rebels, I say, had considered this, think you they would have preferred their own will before God's will? For doing as they did, they prayed against themselves. But I think that ignorance was a great cause of it; truly I think that if this had been opened unto them, they would never have taken such an enterprise in hand. And here we have occasion to consider how much we are bounden unto God, that he opens unto us his word so plainly, and teaches us so truly how we should

behave ourselves towards the magistrates and their laws: but for all that, I fear there are some of us who little regard their laws and statutes: such despisers of magistrates, when they pray, they pray against themselves.*

Therefore it is most proper for us to live in subjection, and not to prefer our own will before God's will. For when I do stubbornly against acts which are set out by our natural king, and his most honourable counsellors, then I prefer my will before God's will, and so sin damnably. These things ought well to be noted; for it is not a trifling matter, there hangeth damnation or salvation upon it. Therefore, it is good to know the laws; and I call him a good man, and her a good woman, who are content to be ruled by the laws, and so declare their subjection and obedience unto God and the magistrates.

There are some men who say, when the king's majesty himself commands me to do so, then I will do it, not before: this is a wicked saying, and damnable: for we may not be so excused. Scripture is plain in it, and shows us that we ought to obey his officers, having authority from the king, as well as the king himself. Therefore this excuse will not, and cannot serve before God. Yet let the magistrates take heed to their office and duties; for the magistrates may not do all things according to their pleasures and minds: they have authority of God to do well, and not harm; to edify, and not to destroy; to punish the wicked and obstinate, and to comfort those who live well and godly; to defend the same from wrong and injuries of the wicked. So it appears that every one in his order, in his degree and calling, ought to do the will of God, and not his own will and pleasure. This is our duty, happy are we if we do it indeed. O that men in authority would consider whereunto God has ordained them! St. Paul saith, The magistrate is "God's ordinary minister, to punish malefactors and ill doers." God saith, "I will avenge myself," and so he doth by his magistrates; for that is his ordinary way, whereby he punishes malefactors. But magistrates must take heed they go no further than God allows them to do: if they do, they themselves shall be punished. There are many examples in Scripture whereby it appears how grievously God has punished wicked magistrates.

In sum, St. Peter gives a rule not only unto the magis-

* Latimer here instances several laws which are now obsolete or repealed.

trates, but unto the subjects, saying, "It is the will of God that you with your good, godly, and honest conversation shall stop the mouth of your adversaries." What did St. Peter call well-doing? Well-doing is to live according to God's laws and commandments. God's commandment is, that we shall obey magistrates; therefore those who disobey and transgress the laws of the magistrates, they do not according to God's will and pleasure; they do but mock God, they stop not the mouth of the adversaries, as St. Peter would have them to do; but they rather give occasion unto the wicked to slander and blaspheme the holy word of God. St. Peter would have us stop their mouths with well-doing. Many men when they have been reproved of preachers because of their wicked living, have gone about to stop their mouth with slanderous words; this stopping is an ill stopping. St. Peter would have us stop with well-doing. Now would magistrates not be spoken ill of, and reproved by preachers? Let them do well. Likewise St. Paul saith of the subjects, "Wilt thou not fear the higher power? Do well, and thou shalt be commended." Now even as it is with the temporal sword, so is it with the spiritual. There are some men who cannot bear to be rebuked; they cannot bear when the preacher speaks against their wickedness: unto them I say, "Will you not be rebuked of the preacher? then do well;" leave off your covetousness, your ambition, your anger, vengeance, and malice, your lechery and filthiness, your bloodshedding, and such like sins; leave them, amend your life, or else the preacher, according to his office, will rebuke and reprove you: be you ever so great lords or ladies, he will touch you to the quick. For a good and godly preacher can do no less; seeing God dishonoured, perceiving him to be blasphemed, his will neglected, and not executed by those who ought with all their study and endeavour to apply themselves that his will might be done. For he is well worthy, he is the Lord, he created heaven and earth, and is therefore the right natural Lord over it. But for all that, the devil is Lord more than he is, not by right or inheritance, but by conquest, by usurpation; he is an usurper. God, as I said before, is the natural and lawful Lord over the earth, because he made it; yet it pleased his divine majesty to make mankind, as you would say, lieutenant over it; so that mankind should bear the rule over the whole earth. Therefore God said unto him,

"Be ruler over it;" also, "Replenish the earth, and subdue it." Here Adam and his wife, and so all his posterity were by God made rulers over the earth, as God's high deputies, or his lieutenants. So, concerning God's ordinance, mankind was the lawful inheritor of this kingdom. But now comes in the devil with his crafty conveyances, and with his false subtleties, he inveigled first the woman, and afterwards the man, persuading them to transgress God's holy commandments; with which so doing they lost the favour of God, and their dignities; and so the devil, through his false lies, substituted himself as an usurper or conqueror: and so he is a possessor, not lawfully but wrongfully.

Though he did say to our Saviour, showing him the kingdoms of the world, "I may give them to whomsoever I will," he lied falsely. God will destroy him at the length for all his subtleties and lies, they shall not save him. Yet for all that he is a great ruler. For this is most certain and true, a great many more do the will of the devil than of God; whatsoever they babble with their mouths, look upon their works, and you shall find it so. For all proud persons, all ambitious persons, who are ever climbing up, and yet never are well, all such do not the will of God, and therefore pertain not to his kingdom: all ireful, rebellious persons, all quarrellers and wranglers, all bloodshedders, do the will of the devil, and not God's will. God saith, "I will avenge myself:" which he does through the magistrate; and when the magistrate is slack, he does it himself. Now those ireful, malicious persons, that hate their neighbours, they do not the will of God, but of the devil. Also these subtle, deceitful persons, who have no conscience to defraud and beguile their neighbours, that care not for breaking their promises, nor are ashamed to utter false ware, they pertain all to the devil. Also, those that will not make restitution of ill-gotten goods, they serve the devil. Scripture saith, "Whosoever sinneth is of the devil;" which is a very hard word to be spoken of the Holy Ghost, and a fearful word, able to withdraw us from sin, if we had any fear of God in our hearts. Amongst those may be numbered all slothful persons, who will not travail for their living—they do the will of the devil. God bids us get our living with labour; they will not labour but rather go about a begging, and spoil the very poor and needy. Therefore such valiant beggars are thieves before

God. Some of these valiant lubbers, when they came to my house I communed with them, charging them with transgressing God's laws. "Is not this a great labour, say they, to run from one town to another to get our meat? I think we labour as hard as other men do." In such wise they go about to excuse their unlawful beggary and thievery: but such idle lubbers are much deceived; for they consider not that such labour is not allowed of God. We must labour so as may stand with godliness, according to his appointment; else thieves who rob in the night time, do they not labour? Yea, sometimes they labour with great care, peril, and danger of their lives. Is it therefore godly, because it is a labour? No, no; we must labour as God has appointed us, every man in his state. Further, these drunkards, who abuse the gifts of God; also these lecherers and fornicators; these violators of holy matrimony, who live not according unto God's law; also these swearers, forswearers, liars; all those do not the will of God. Therefore it is to be lamented by every Christian heart, when we see how many servants the devil has, and God so few. But all those who serve the devil, are rebels against God; God was their Lord, they swerve from him through wicked living, and so become servants of the devil. Therefore those Christian people that have a desire to live after God's will and commandments, they live amongst the wicked even as it were amongst the rebels.

They that dwelt in Norfolk or Devonshire at the time of rebellion, they who were faithful to their king and prince, how think you they were treated? Full miserably, God knows; either they were constrained to help their wicked purposes, or else they must suffer all calamities which could be devised. Even so shall all those be treated who intend to live well, according to God's commandments. For the rebels, that is, the wicked who have forsaken the Lord God, and taken the devil to be ruler over them, they shall compel them to follow, or else to suffer all calamities and miseries. And so shall be verified the saying of our Saviour Christ, "I am not come to send peace, but the sword." (Matt. x.) Which is indeed a strange saying, but it has this meaning: God is a God of peace and concord, he loves unity and concord: but when he cannot have peace, by reason of the devil, then he will have the sword; that is to say, God loves unity, he would have all agree together, but

because of the wicked we cannot: therefore he will rather have us to choose the sword, that is, to strive and withstand their wickedness, than to agree to them. And therefore this doctrine is called a seditious doctrine; but who are those rebels? Even they themselves who call this doctrine seditious; they themselves, I say, are traitors against God. Wherefore our Saviour, seeing he can have no peace with the wicked, will have us rather to withstand their wickedness, and so bring them to reformation: and this is the cause wherefore he will have his flock separated by itself from the wicked.

Therefore let us pray unto God our heavenly Father, "Thy will be done." This is the prayer of all Christian people, who have a will to do God's will; but those impenitent sinners, who are not yet weary of their sins, never pray; for though they say the words, yet it is to no purpose, they say them without understanding: therefore it is but lip labour, it is no prayer, it is but the devil's service. For a man may serve the devil, with saying the *Pater-noster*, when he saith it with a defiled mind. Let us therefore order ourselves so, that we may say it worthily as it ought to be. Let us lay aside all wickedness and ill living, so that we may say from the bottom of our heart, "Our Father, which art in heaven; thy will be done." So did queen Esther; so did all good saints of God; and though this prayer was not made at that time, for they were a great while before Christ's coming, yet they had this prayer in effect. For they believed in Almighty God, they believed in Abraham's seed, which was promised; which faith stood them in as good stead, and they were as well saved through that same belief, as we now through our belief. For there is no difference between their belief and ours, but this; they believed in Christ who was to come, and we believe in Christ, who is come already.

Now their belief served them, as well as ours does us. For at that time God required no further at their hands than was explained unto them: we have in our time a further and more perfect knowledge of Christ than they.*

Queen Esther, when Haman, that wicked fellow, had power over her, committed all the matter unto God, with fasting and prayer. But Saint Peter, what did he? Marry, he forgot his *Pater-noster;* for when there came

* Latimer here refers to Judith and Susanna.

but a foolish woman, asking him, "Art not thou a Galilean?" Art not thou one of this new learning? art not thou a gospeller? What did Peter? he was quite gone; he denied it; he forgot his Pater-noster! For if he had had grace to consider that he ought rather to suffer death, than forsake his master Christ, then he would have said, "Our Father, thy will be done. I am ready to suffer for thy sake whatsoever thou shalt lay upon me." But he did not so, he forgot himself. What did our Saviour? he turned back and looked upon him. Happy was Peter that our Saviour looked upon him again, for it was a gracious token.

Judas, that false man, that traitor, forgot the same petition, and so remained in his error still to the end. Surely he was a sorrowful, and a heavy man, insomuch that he made restitution. He was much better than a great many of us are, who, when they have injured and wronged poor men, will make no restitution. I tell you truth, Judas was much better than such fellows are. "Restitution leads to repentance," saith the text; but he lacked faith. And so between Peter and him, who were both sorrowful men, this was the difference. Peter had faith, Judas lacked it: yet he was exceedingly sorrowful for his wickedness, insomuch that he went and hanged himself; therefore he forgot this petition. So likewise all voluntary sinners, all unrepenting sinners, none of them say this petition as they ought to do; they say it not worthily and profitably, for they have no will to do God's will; their will is to do their own will and pleasure.

But above all things, the quest-mongers* had need to take heed; for there all things go by oath. They had need to say, "Our Father, thy will be done." For they shall be moved to do this and that, which is against God. They must judge by their oath, according to conscience, guilty or not guilty. When he is guilty, in what case are those who say, Not guilty? Scripture shows what a thing it is, when a man is a malefactor, and the quest-mongers justify him, and pronounce him not guilty; saying, "He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just man, they are both abominable before the Lord." Who is abominable? He that doth not the will of God: the will of God is, that the wicked should be punished. I myself once knew where there was a man slain by another man in anger; it was

* Jurors.

done openly, the man-killer was taken and put in prison. Suit was made to the quest-mongers, for it was a rich man that had done the act; at the length, every man had a crown for his good will: and so this open man-killer was pronounced not guilty.

Lo, they sold their souls unto the devil for five shillings: for which souls Christ suffered death; and I dare pronounce, except they amend and are sorry for their faults, they shall be damned in hell, world without end. They had clean forgotten this petition, "Thy will be done." For they did the will of the devil. It had been a good deed to cut off their crowns by their necks, to the example of all others. Therefore, I say, the quest-mongers had need to say, "Our Father, which art in heaven, thy will be done." Truly it is a marvel that this realm sink not down to hell headlong. What perjuries, swearing, and cursing are every where, in every corner? Therefore, I say, we had need to pray earnestly, that God's will may be done. And we should be content to lose our lives for righteousness' sake; for he that loseth his life, because he will not agree to the dishonour of God, he seeketh that God's will may be done. Happy is that man, for he findeth his life, he loseth it not: for Christ will be his keeper.

Joab, that great and valiant captain, he knew well enough when David sent unto him good Uriah with letters; he knew, I say, that the king's will was against God's will, yet he looked through his fingers, he winked at it, he would rather do the wicked will of the king than the will of God. Of such fellows there are a great number, who care not for the honour and will of God. These chaplains about the king, and great men, had need to say, "Our Father, thy will be done;" but they are very slow and slack; they wink commonly at all matters be they ever so bad. They are chaplains at hand.* They dare not "rebuke the world of sin;" they dare not do as the prophet commands them to do, when he saith, "Let the hills hear the judgments of the Lord; though they smoke:" as he saith, "Touch the hills, and they will smoke." Yea, and though they smoke, yet strike them; spare them not, tell them their faults. But great men cannot bear to be so rebuked, their chaplains must be taught discretion, if they will go so to work. They say magistrates would be brought out of estimation, if they should be handled so.

* Or handy—ready to do as they are told.

Sirs, I will tell you what you should do to keep your estimation and credit. Do well, handle uprightly and indifferently all matters, defend the people from oppression, do your office as God hath appointed you to do; when you do so, I warrant you, you will keep your estimation and credit. And I warrant you again, the preacher will not strike nor cut you with his sword; but rather praise you, and commend your well-doing. Else when you do naught, and wickedly oppress the poor, and give false judgments; when you do so, he is no godly preacher who will hold his peace, and not strike you with his sword, that you smoke again. But it is commonly as the Scripture saith, "The wicked is praised in the desires of his wickedness." Chaplains will not do their duties, they will not draw their swords, but rather flatter, they will use discretion: but what shall follow? Marry, they shall have God's curse upon their heads for their labour: this shall be all the gain that they get by their flatterings.

Another Scripture saith, "The great and mighty men be called benefactors, or well-doers:" but of whom are they called so? Marry, by flatterers, by those who seek not to do the will of God, but the pleasure of men.

St. John Baptist, that hardy knight* and excellent preacher of God, he said this petition rightly with a good faith, "Our Father, thy will be done:" therefore he went to the king, saying, "Sire, it is not lawful for thee to do so." See what boldness he had! How hot a stomach in God's quarrel, to defend God's honour and glory! But our chaplains, what do they now-a-days? Marry, they wink at it, they will not displease: for they seek livings, they seek benefices; therefore they are not worthy to be God's officers. Isaiah, that faithful minister of God, he is a good plain fellow, he telleth them the matter plainly, saying, "Thy silver is turned to dross, thy princes are unfaithful, and fellows of thieves." He is no flatterer, he tells them the truth. "Thy princes," said he, "are bribe-takers, subverters of justice." This Isaiah did; for he had respect to God's word, he perceived things amiss; he knew that it was his part to admonish, to cut them with his sword. Would to God our preachers would be as fervent to promote the honour and glory of God,—to admonish the great and the small to do the will of the Lord. I pray God they may be

* Champion or servant.

as fervent as our Saviour was when he said to his disciples, "My meat is to do the will of my Father which is in heaven;" that is to say, you are not more desirous to eat your meat when you are hungry, than I am to do my Father's will who is in heaven. By what occasion our Saviour saith these words you shall perceive, when you consider the circumstances. I pray you read the chapter, it is the fourth of John. The story is this: he sent his disciples to a town to buy meat, (whence it appears that our Saviour had money;) after their departure he sat down, which was a token that he was weary; and, I warrant you, he had never a cushion to lay under him. Now as he was sitting so, there came a woman from that town to fetch water; he desired her to give him drink. She made answer, "Will you drink with me which am a Samaritan?" So they went forward in their talk: at length he bade her go call her husband. She made answer, I have no husband: "Thou sayest well, said our Saviour, for thou hast had five, and this that thou hast now is not thy husband." And so he revealed himself unto her.

Some men, peradventure, will say, What meaneth this, that our Saviour spake alone with this woman? Answer, His humility and gentleness are showed herein. For he was content to talk with her, being alone, and to teach her the way to heaven. Again, some men may learn here not to be so hasty in their judgments; that when they see two persons talk together they suspect them; for in so doing they might suspect our Saviour himself. It is not good; it is against the will of God to judge rashly. I know what I mean; I know what unhappy tales are abroad; but I can do no more but to give you warning. Now the woman went her way into the city, making much ado, how she had found the Messiah, the Saviour of the world: so that a great many of the Samaritans came out unto him. Now when the woman was gone, the disciples desired him to eat; he made them answer, "I have other meat;" then they thought somebody had brought him some meat: at length he brake out and said, "I am desirous to do my Father's will, as you are of meat and drink." Let us now, for God's sake, be as desirous to do the will of God as we are to eat and drink. Let us endeavour ourselves to keep his laws and commandments, then whatsoever we shall desire of him he will give it unto us; we shall have it.

We read oftentimes in Scripture that our Saviour was

preaching according unto his vocation. I would that every man would go so diligently about his business. The priests to go to their books, not to spend their time shamefully in hawking, hunting, and tarrying at ale-houses: if they would go to their books, in so doing they should do the will of God; but the most part of them do their own will, they take their pleasure; but God will find them out at length, he will mete with them when he seeth his time. On a time when our Saviour was preaching, his mother came unto him, very desirous to speak with him, so that she made means to speak with him, interrupting his sermon, which was not good manners. Therefore, according to St. Augustine and St. Jerome, she was pricked a little with vain-glory; she would have been known to be his mother, else she would not have been so hasty to speak with him. And here you may perceive that we gave her too much, in thinking her to be without any sparkle of sins,* which was too much; for no man born into this world is without sin, save Christ only. The school doctors say she was arrogant. One came and told our Saviour as he was teaching, "Sir, thy mother is here, and would speak with thee." He made answer as he did when he was but twelve years old, "I must be about my Father's business;" so he saith now, stretching out his hands, "Who is my mother? He that doth the will of my Father that is in heaven." Luke saith, "He that heareth the word of God, and doth it." Mark this well, he saith, "and doth it;" let us do so, let us not only be hearers but doers; then we shall be his brethren and sisters, according to his promise: we must hear his word, and do it. For truly, if Mary, his mother, had not heard his word and believed it, she should never have been saved. For she was not saved because she was his natural mother, but because she believed in him; because she was his spiritual mother. Remember, therefore, that all who do his will are his kinsfolk. But remember that in another place he saith, "Not all that say, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven." Here you see that the matter standeth not *in saying*, but *in doing;* do his will, and then resort unto him, and thou shalt be welcome. We read in Luke, where our Saviour said, "That servant that knoweth the will of his master, and doth it not, shall be beaten with many stripes." He that

* The popish idea that the Virgin Mary was immaculate, or without sin.

knoweth not shall be beaten, but not so much. We must first know, and then do; it is a good thing to know, but it is a heinous thing to know, and not to do; it is a great sin to slander God's word with wicked living, as it is commonly seen amongst men. But this fault, if it is not amended, shall have grievous punishment.

Now, some men, seeing it is so that those who know God's word, and do not the same, shall be beaten with many stripes, will say, "Then I will keep me from it, and so when I am damned I shall have the easier punishment." No, no, my friend: 'Wilful ignorance excuseth not.' To say I will not hear it, for I intend to do as it shall please me, this is not ignorance, brother, but rather contumacy, or despising God's word. Those who would fain know, but cannot, for they have no teacher, they shall be excused somewhat, for they shall have easier pain than the others have; as he saith, "Wo unto thee, Chorazin, because if in Sodom," &c., meaning that the people of Sodom shall have easier judgment than the other; but as for those who refuse to hear when they might hear, they are in an ill case, and shall be punished with unspeakable pains. And I tell you, the most ignorant man is not at all excused; for so saith God by his prophets, "The wicked (saith he) shall die, though he never hath had warning before." So we see that ignorance excuses not: but the ignorant are the less punished because of their ignorance; as there are degrees in hell, one shall be punished more grievously than the other, according to their deserts. There are some men in England who say, "No, I will hear none of them all, till they agree amongst themselves." Such fellows truly shall never come to the gospel. For there will be contentions as long as the devil is alive; he cannot suffer God's word to be spread abroad. Therefore he doth, and will do till the world's end, what he can to hinder the word of God: then it is likely that those fellows shall never come to hear God's word, and therefore they shall deservedly be damned as despisers of God's most holy word.

Further, this petition hath an addition, "As it is in heaven." The writers make two manner of heavens, a spiritual heaven and a temporal heaven. The spiritual heaven is where God's will is fully done, where the angels are, who do the will and pleasure of God without dilation.*

* Perfectly, without diminution.

Now, when we say, "As it is in heaven," we pray God that we may do his will as perfectly as the angels do. Examples in Scripture we have many, which teach us the diligent service which the angels do unto the Lord.

When king David fell in a presumption he commanded his captain Joab to number his people, which was against the Lord; and Joab did naughtily in obeying the king in such things, but he went and numbered eight hundred thousand, and five hundred thousand men able to fight, beside women and children. For this act God was angry with David, and sent his prophet, who told him that God would plague him, and bad him to choose whether he would have seven years' hunger, or that his enemies should prevail against him for three months, or to have three days' pestilence. He made answer, saying, It is better to fall into the hands of God than of men: and so chose the pestilence. After that, within three days died threescore and ten thousand!

This story is a great declaration how angry God is with sin. Now David, that good king, seeing the plague of God over the people, said unto God, "Lord, it is not they that have sinned, it is I myself; punish me, and let them alone:" this was a good mind in David; there are but few kings now that would do so. Now, at the length, God was moved with pity, and said unto the angel, "It is enough, leave off:" by and by the plague ceased. Where you see how ready the angels of God are to do the Lord's commandment. After that, David was minded to be thankful unto God, and to offer a great sacrifice unto him, and so to remove the wrath of God: and therefore he made suit to one of his subjects for certain ground to build an altar upon. The same man was willing to give it unto the king freely; but David would not take it at his hands. Here kings may learn, that it is not lawful for them to take away other men's lands for their own use. This good king, David, would not take it when it was offered unto him. He did not as Ahab, the wicked man, who did Naboth wrong in taking away his vineyard against his will. Another example, wherein it appears how diligently the angels do God's commandments. Sennacherib, king of the Assyrians, having a captain called Rabshakeh, which captain, after he had besieged Jerusalem, spake blasphemous words against God Almighty, saying to the Jews, "Think you that your God is able to help

you, or to defend you from my hand?" Now Hezekiah, that good king, hearing that such blasphemous words were spoken against God, fell to prayer, desired God for aid; sent for the prophet Isaiah, and asked his counsel. The end was, God sent his angel, who killed a hundred and eighty-five thousand of the Assyrians in one night: the king himself hardly escaped, and with great danger and fear got him home. Here you see what a God our God is, whose will we ought to do. Therefore let us endeavour ourselves to do his will and pleasure; and when we are not able to do it, as we are not indeed, let us call unto him for help and aid.

The other heaven is called a material heaven, where the sun and the moon, and the stars are; which heaven doth God's commandment too. As it appears in the books of Joshua and the Kings, how the sun stood still at the commandment of God: also how the shadow went backward; like as Job saith, "Thou gavest commandment to the sun, and it arose not." Therefore at the commandment of God they kept their ordinary course, as God commanded them in the first beginning. Also the rain and the snow come at his commandment: in sum, nothing rebels in its state wherein it was set at the first, but man: man will not be ruled by him, all other things are obedient: rain cometh when God will have it, and snow at his time. We read in Ahab's time, that Elijah the prophet stopt the rain for three years and six months to punish the people; wherefrom followed a great dearth. Afterward, at the request of the same Elijah, God sent rain, which tempered the ground to bring fruits.—I think there are some Elijahs abroad at this time which stop the rain—we have not had rain a good while. Therefore let us pray to God that we may do his will, and then we shall have all things necessary for soul and body. For what was this Elijah? "A sinful man, born and conceived in sin:"yet God, seeing his confidence, granted his requests. For he was a man that feared the Lord, and trusted in him: therefore God loved him, and heard his prayer. Therefore, I say, let us do as he did, then God will hear our prayers; but we are fleshly, we are carnal, we can do nothing perfectly as we ought to do; wherefore we have need to say with St. Augustine, "Lord, do thou with me what thou commandest, and then command what thou wilt." For we of our own strength and power are not able to do his commandment; but that lack

our Saviour will supply with his fulfilling, and with his perfectness he will take away our imperfectness. Now since we have spoken much of prayer, I will desire you let us pray together, and so make an end; but you must pray with a penitent heart; for God will not hear the prayer that proceedeth from an impenitent heart; it is abominable in his sight. I desire you to say after me, "Our Father," &c. Amen.

THE

FIFTH SERMON

UPON

THE LORD'S PRAYER.*

MATTHEW vi.

Give us this day our daily bread.

THIS is a very good prayer if one should say no more at one time but this; for as we see our need, so we shall pray. When we see God's name dishonoured, blasphemed, and ill spoken of, then a man, a faithful man, should say, "Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name." When we see the devil reign, and all the world follow his kingdom, then we may say, "Our Father, which art in heaven, thy kingdom come." When we see that the world follows her own desires and lusts, and not God's will and his commandments, and it grieves us to see this; we are sorry for it; we shall make our lamentation unto God for it, saying, "Our Father, which art in heaven, thy will be done." When we want necessaries for the maintenance of this life, and every thing is dear, then we may say, "Our Father, which art in heaven, give us this day our daily bread." Therefore as we see cause, so we should pray. And it is better to say one of these short prayers with a good faith, than the whole psalter without faith.

By what I have now said, you may perceive that the common opinion and estimation which the people have had of this prayer, the Lord's prayer, I say, is far from that which it is indeed. For it was esteemed as nothing; for when we are disposed to despise a man, and call him an ignorant fool, we say he cannot say his *Pater-noster*;† and

* The reader of these sermons will recollect, that the preachers of that period were accustomed to take a wider range in their observations upon Scripture, for popular use, than is requisite or usual in modern times.

† Lord's Prayer.

so we make it a light matter, as though every man knew it. But I tell you it is a great matter, it contains weighty things, if it is thoroughly examined, as a learned man could do: but as for me, I will show unto you what I have learned out of the Holy Scripture, and learned men's books, who expound the same.

"Give us this day our daily bread." Every word is to be considered, for they have their importance. This word "bread," signifies all manner of sustenance for the preservation of this life; all things whereby man should live, are contained in this word "bread."

You must remember what I said of that petition, "Hallowed be thy name." There we pray unto God, that he will give us grace to live so, that we may with all our conversations and doings hallow and sanctify him, according as his word telleth us. Now as the preaching of God's word is most necessary to bring us into this hallowing, we pray in the same petition for the office of preaching. For the sanctifying of the name of God cannot be, except the office of preaching be maintained, and his word be preached and known; therefore in the same petition, when I say, "Hallowed be thy name," I pray that his word may be spread abroad and known, through which cometh sanctifying.

So likewise in this petition, "Give us this day our daily bread;" we pray for all those things which are necessary and requisite for the sustenance of our souls and bodies. Now the first and principal thing that we have need of in this life, is the magistrates—without a magistrate we should never live well and quietly. Then it is necessary and most needful to pray unto God for them, that the people may have rest, and apply to their business, every man in his calling, the husbandman in tilling and ploughing, the artificer in his business. For you must ever consider that where war is there are all discommodities; no man can do his duty according unto his calling; as appears now in Germany, the emperor and the French king being at controversy, I warrant you there is little rest or quietness. Therefore in this petition we pray unto God for our magistrates, that they may rule and govern this realm well and godly, and keep us from invasions of aliens and strangers, and execute justice, and punish malefactors; and this is so requisite that we cannot live without it. Therefore when we say, "Give us this day our daily

bread;" we pray for the king, his counsellors, and all his officers. But not every man that saith these words, understands so much; for it is obscurely included, so that none perceive it but those who earnestly and diligently consider the same. But St. Paul expresses it with more words plainly, saying, "I exhort you to make supplications and prayers for all men, but especially for the kings, and for those which be aloft." Whereto? "That we may live godly and quietly, with all honesty and godliness." And when I pray for them, I pray for myself. For I pray for them that they may rule so that I and all men may live under them quietly and at rest. And we desire a quiet life, that we may the better serve God, hear his word, and live after it.

For in the rebels' time, I pray you what godliness was showed amongst them? In what state think you were those faithful subjects who at the same time were amongst them? They had sorrow enough, I warrant you.

So it appears, that where war is, there right godliness is banished and gone. Therefore to pray for a quiet life, is as much as to pray for a godly life, that we may serve God in our calling, and get our livings uprightly. So it appears that praying for magistrates, is as much as to pray for ourselves.

They that are children, and live under the rule of their parents, or have tutors, pray in this petition for their parents and tutors: for they are necessary for their bringing up; and God will accept the prayer of them, as well as of those who are of age. For God has no respect of persons; he is as ready to hear the youngest as the oldest; therefore let them be brought up in godliness, let them know God. Let parents and tutors do their duty to bring them up so, that as soon as their age serveth, they may taste and savour God; let them fear God in the beginning, and so they will do also when they are old. Because I speak here of orphans, I shall exhort you to be merciful unto them, for it is a thing that pleases God, as St. James witnesses, saying, "Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father, is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their afflictions, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

It is a common speech amongst the people, and much used, that they say, all religious houses are pulled down; which is a very peevish saying, and not true, for they are

not pulled down. That man and that woman who live together godly and quietly; doing the works of their calling, and fear God, hear his word and keep it; that same is a religious house; that is the house which pleaseth God. For religion, pure religion, I say, consists not in wearing of a monk's cowl, but in righteousness, justice, and well-doing, and, as St. James saith, in visiting the orphans, and widows that have lost their husbands, orphans that lack their parents; to help them when they are poor, to speak for them when they are oppressed: herein standeth true religion, God's religion, I say; the other which was used, was an unreligious life, yea, rather an hypocrisy. There is a text in Scripture; I never read it but I remember these religious houses; "There is a way, which way seemeth to men to be good, whose end is eternal perdition." When the end is naught,* all is naught.

So were these monks' houses, these religious houses; there were many people, especially widows, who would give over house-keeping, and go to such houses, when they might have done much good in maintaining of servants, and relieving poor people, but they went their way. What a madness was that!

Again, how much cause we have to thank God, that we know what true religion is, that God hath revealed unto us the deceitfulness of those monks, who had a goodly show before the world of great holiness, but they were naught within. Therefore Scripture saith, "That which is highly esteemed before men, is abominable before God." Therefore the man and woman that live in the fear of God, are much better than those houses were.

I read once a story of a holy man, some say it was St. Anthony, who had been a long season in the wilderness, neither eating nor drinking any thing but bread and water; at length he thought himself so holy, that there would be nobody like him. Therefore he desired of God to know who should be his fellow in heaven. God made him an answer, and commanded him to go to Alexandria, there he should find a cobbler who should be his fellow in heaven! Now he went thither and sought him out, and fell in acquaintance with him, and tarried with him three or four days to see his conversation. In the morning his wife and he prayed together, then they went to their business, he in

* Evil.

his shop, and she about her housewifery. At dinner time they had bread and cheese, wherewith they were well content, and took it thankfully. Their children were well taught to fear God, and to say the Lord's Prayer, and the Creed, and the Ten Commandments; and so he spent his time in doing his duty truly. I warrant you he did not make so many false stitches as cobblers do now-a-days. St. Anthony perceiving that, came to the knowledge of himself, and laid aside his pride and presumption.

By this example you may learn, that honest conversation and godly living is much regarded before God; insomuch that this poor cobbler, doing his duty diligently, was made St. Anthony's fellow. So it appears that we are not destitute of religious houses; those who apply to their business uprightly and hear God's word, they shall be St. Anthony's fellows; that is to say, they shall be numbered amongst the children of God.

Further, in this petition, the man and wife pray one for the other. For one is a help unto the other, and so the one is necessary to the other; therefore they pray one for the other, that God will spare them their lives, to live together quietly and godly, according to his ordinance and institution; and this is good and needful. As for such as are not married, you shall know that I do not so much praise marriage, that I should think a single life is naught: as I have heard some who will scarce allow single life. They think in their hearts that all those who are not married are naught; therefore they have a common saying amongst them: "What?" say they, "they are made of the same metal as we are made of," thinking them to be naught in their living; which suspicions are to be condemned before God; for we know not what gifts God hath given unto them, therefore we cannot with good conscience condemn them or judge them. Truth it is, marriage is good and honourable amongst all men, as St. Paul witnesses; "And the Lord shall and will judge, that is, condemn, adulterers and whoremongers;" but not those who live in single life. When thou livest in lechery, then thou shalt be damned: but when thou livest godly and honestly in single life, it is well and allowable before God, yea, and better than marriage. For St. Paul saith, "I will have you to be without carefulness," that is, unmarried; and he showeth the advantages, saying, "They that are unmarried, set their minds upon God, how to please him, and to

live after his commandments. But as for the others, the man is careful how to please his wife; and, again, the woman how to please her husband:" and this is St. Paul's saying of the one as well as of the other.

Therefore I wish you not to condemn single life, but to take one with the other; as St. Paul teaches us, not so to extol the one, that we should condemn the other. For St. Paul praises single life as well as marriage; yea, and more too. For those that are single have more liberty to pray and to serve God than the others: for they that are married, have many troubles and afflictions. This I speak, because I hear that there are some who condemn single life. I would have them know that matrimony is good, godly, and allowable unto all men: yet for all that, the single life ought not to be despised or condemned, seeing that Scripture allows it; yea, and affirms that it is better than matrimony, if it is without sin and offence.

Further, we pray here in this petition for good servants —that God will send unto us good, faithful, and trusty servants, for they are necessary for this bodily life, that our business may be done; and those who live in single life, have more need of good, trusty servants than those who are married. Those who are married, can better oversee their servants. For when the man is from home, at least the wife oversees them, and keeps them in good order. For I tell you, servants must be overseen and looked to; if they are not overseen, what are they? It is a great gift of God to have a good servant, for the most part of servants are but eye-servants; when their master is gone, they leave off their labour, and play the sluggard; but such servants do contrary to God's commandment, and shall be damned in hell for their slothfulness, except they repent. . . . . .

There was once a fellow who asked a philosopher a question, saying, "How is a horse made fat?" The philosopher answered, saying, "With his master's eye:" not meaning that the horse should be fed with his master's eye, but that the master should oversee the horse, and take heed to the horse-keeper, that the horse might be well fed. For when a man rides by the way, and comes to his inn, and gives unto the hostler his horse to walk, and he himself sits at the table and makes good cheer, and forgets his horse, the hostler cometh and saith, "Sir,

how much bread shall I give unto your horse?" He saith, "Give him twopenny worth;" I warrant you this horse will never be fat. Therefore a man should not say to the hostler, Go, give him, but he should see himself that the horse have it. In like manner, those that have servants must not only command them what they shall do, but they must see that it is done. One other man asked that same philosopher this question, saying, "What manure is it that makes a man's land most fruitful in bringing forth much corn?" Marry, said he, "The owner's footsteps." Not meaning that the master should come and walk up and down, and tread the ground; but that he would have him come and oversee the servants tilling the ground, commanding them to do it diligently, and so to look himself upon their work: this shall be the best manure, saith the philosopher. Therefore never trust servants, except you are assured of their diligence; for I tell you truly, I can come nowhere but I hear masters complaining of their servants. I think verily they fear not God, they consider not their duties. Well, I will burden them with this one text of Scripture, and then go forward in my matters. The prophet Jeremy saith "Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord negligently," or, as another translation has it, "fraudulently;" take which you will.

It is no light matter that God pronounces them to be cursed. But what is cursed? What is it? Cursed is as much as to say, it shall not go well with them, they shall not prosper, my face shall be against them. Is not this a great thing? Truly consider it as you list, it is no light matter to be cursed of God, who ruleth heaven and earth. And though the prophet speaks these words of warriors going to war, yet it may be spoken of all servants, yea, of all states, but especially of servants, for St. Paul saith, "You servants, serve the Lord Christ, it is his work." Then when it is the Lord's work, take heed how you do it, for cursed is he that doeth it negligently. But where is such a servant as Jacob was to Laban? How painful was he! How careful for his master's profit! Insomuch that when somewhat had perished he restored it again of his own. And where is such a servant as Eliezer was to Abraham his master? What a journey had he! How careful he was, and when he came to his journey's end, he would neither eat nor drink before he had done his

master's message; so that all his mind was given only to serve his master, and to do according to his commandments: insomuch that he would neither eat nor drink till he had done according to his master's will. Much like to our Saviour's saying, "This is my meat, to do the will of him that sent me." I pray you, servants, mark this Eliezer well, consider all the circumstances of his diligent and faithful service, and follow it: else if you follow it not, you read it to your own condemnation. Likewise consider the true service which Joseph, that godly young man, did unto his master Potiphar: how faithfully he served, without any guile or fraud; therefore God promoted him so, that he was made afterwards the ruler over all Egypt. Likewise consider how faithful Daniel was in serving king Darius. Alas, that you servants are so stubborn-hearted and will not consider this, you will not remember that your service is the work of the Lord, you will not consider that the curse of God hangeth upon your heads for your slothfulness and negligence. Take heed, therefore, and look to your duties.

Now, further, whosoever prayeth this prayer with a good faithful heart, as he ought to do, he prayeth for all ploughmen and husbandmen, that God will prosper and increase their labour; for except he give the increase, all their labour and travail is lost. Therefore it is needful to pray for them, that God may send his benediction by their labour; for without corn and such manner of sustenance, we cannot live. And in that prayer we include all artificers; for through their labours, God gives us many commodities which we could not do without.

We pray also for wholesome air, and pray likewise for seasonable weather; when we have too much rain, we pray for fair weather; again, when we lack rain, we pray that God will send rain. And in that prayer we pray for our cattle, that God will preserve them for our use from all diseases; for without cattle we cannot live, we cannot till the ground, nor have meat, therefore we include them in our prayer also.

So you see that this prayer contains innumerable things. For we pray for all such things as are expedient and needful for the preservation of this life. And not this alone, but we have here good doctrine and divers admonitions besides.

For here we are admonished of the liberality of God

our heavenly Father, which he showeth daily over us. For our Saviour, knowing the liberality of God our heavenly Father, commands us to pray. If he would not give us the things we ask, Christ would not have commanded us to pray. If he had borne an ill will against us, Christ would not have sent us to him. But our Saviour knowing his liberal heart towards us, commanded us to pray, and to desire all things at his hands.

And here we are admonished of our estate and condition—what we are, namely, beggars. For we ask bread; of whom? Of God. What are we, then? What but beggars! The greatest lords and ladies in England are but beggars before God. Seeing, then, that we all are but beggars, why should we disdain and despise poor men? Let us therefore consider that we are but beggars: let us pull down our stomachs; for if we consider the matter well, we are the same as they are in the sight of God; for St. Paul saith, "What hast thou that thou hast not received of God?" (1 Cor. iv.) Thou art but a beggar whatsoever thou art: and though there are some very rich, who have great abundance, of whom have they it?—Of God. What saith that rich man? He saith, "Our Father, which art in heaven; give us this day our daily bread." Then he is a beggar before God as well as the poorest man. Further, how continues the rich man in his riches? Who made him rich? God. For it is written, "The blessing of God maketh rich:" except God bless, it is of no effect; for it is written, "They shall eat, but yet never be satisfied." Eat as much as you will, except God feed you, you shall never be full. So likewise as rich as a man may be, yet he cannot augment his riches, nor keep what he hath, except God be with him, except he bless him; therefore let us not be proud, for we are beggars the best of us.

Note here, that our Saviour bids us to say, "us." This *us* includes all other men. For every one of us prayeth for others. When I say, "Give us this day our daily bread," I pray not for myself only, (if I ask as He biddeth me,) but I pray for all others. Wherefore say I not, "Our Father, give *me* this day my daily bread?" For because God is not my God alone, he is a common God.* And here we are admonished to be friendly, loving, and charitable one to another: for of what God gives I cannot

* A God also for others.

say, "This is *my own;*" but I must say, This is *ours.* For the rich man cannot say, "This is mine alone, God has given it unto me for my own use." Nor yet has the poor man any title unto it, to take it away from him. No, the poor man may not do so; for when he does so, he is a thief before God and man: but yet the poor man hath title to the rich man's goods, so that the rich man ought to let the poor man have part of his riches to help and comfort him withal. Therefore when God sends unto me much, it is not *mine*, but *ours;* it is not given unto me alone, but I must help my poor neighbours withal.

But here I must ask you rich men a question. How happens it you have your riches? We have them of God, you will say. But by what means have you them? By prayer, you will say: we pray for them unto God, and he gives us the same. Very well. But I pray you tell me, what do other men who are not rich? pray they not as well as you do? Yes, you must say; for you cannot deny it. Then it appears that you have your riches not through your own prayers only, but other men help you to pray for them. For they say, "Our Father, give us this day our daily bread," as well as you do; and peradventure they are better than you are, and God hears their prayer sooner than yours. And so it appears most manifestly that you obtain your riches of God, not only through your own prayer, but through other men's also. Other men help you to get them at God's hand? Then it follows, that seeing you get not your riches alone through your own prayer, but through the poor man's prayer, it is right that the poor man should have part of them, and you ought to relieve his necessity and poverty.

But what meaneth God by this inequality, that he gives to some a hundred pounds, unto this man five thousand pounds, unto this man in a manner nothing at all? What meaneth he by this inequality? Here he meaneth, that the rich ought to distribute his riches abroad amongst the poor; for the rich man is but God's officer, God's treasurer, he ought to distribute them according unto his Lord God's commandment. If every man were rich, then no man would do any thing; therefore God makes some rich and some poor. Again, that the rich may have where to exercise his charity, God made some rich and some poor: the poor he sends unto the rich to desire of him in God's

name help and aid. Therefore, you rich men, when there comes a poor man unto you, desiring your help, think none otherwise but that God has sent him unto you, and remember that your riches are not your own, but you are only a steward over them. If you will not do it, then cometh in St. John, who saith, "He that hath the substance of this world, and seeth his brother lack, and helpeth him not, how remaineth the love of God in him?" He speaks not of them that have it not, but of them that have it: that man loves not God, if he help not his neighbour, having wherewith to do it. This is a sore and hard word: there are many who say with their mouths they love God: and if a man should here ask this multitude whether they love God or no, they would say, Yes, God forbid else! But if you consider their unmercifulness unto the poor, you shall see, as St. John said, "The love of God is not within them." Therefore you rich men ever consider of whom you have your riches, be it a thousand pounds, yet you fetch it out of this petition. For this petition, "Give us this day our daily bread," is God's store-house, God's treasure-house: here lieth all his provision, and from hence you fetch it. But ever have in remembrance that this is a common prayer, a poor man prays as well as you, and peradventure God sends these riches unto you for another man's prayers' sake, who prays for you, and whose prayer is more effectual than your own. And therefore you ought to be thankful unto other men, who pray for you unto God, and help you to obtain your riches. Again, this petition is a remedy against the wicked carefulness of men, when they seek how to live, and how to get their livings, in such wise, like as if there were no God at all. And then there are some who will not labour as God has appointed unto them; but rather give themselves to falsehood, to sell false ware, and deceive their neighbours, or to steal other men's sheep or conies:* those fellows are far wide.† Let them come to God's treasure-house, that is to say, let them come to God, and call upon him with a good faith, saying, "Our Father, give us this day our daily bread;" truly God will hear them. For this is the only remedy that we have here on earth—to come to this his treasure-house, and fetch thence such things as we lack. Consider this word "daily." God promises us to feed us daily. If you believe this, why then use you

* Rabbits. † Very wrong.

falsehood and deceit? Therefore leave your falsehood, get you rather to this treasure-house; then you may be sure of a living: for God has determined that all who come unto him, desiring his help, shall be helped. God will not forget them. But our unbelief is so great, that we will not come unto him, we rather go about to get our living with falsehood, than desire the same of him.

O what falsehood is used in England: yea, in the whole world! It were not marvel if the fire from heaven fell upon us, as it did upon the people of Sodom, only for our falsehood's sake! I will tell you of some which are practised in my country where I dwell. But I will not tell it you to teach you to do the same, but rather to abhor it: for those which use such deceitfulness, shall be damned world without end, except they repent. I have known some that had a barren cow, they would fain have had a great deal of money for her, therefore they go and take a calf of another cow, and put it to this barren cow, and so come to the market, pretending that this cow has brought this calf, and so they sell their barren cow six or eight shillings dearer than they would have done else. The man which bought the cow comes home, peradventure he has many children, and has no more cattle but this cow, and thinks he shall have some milk for his children; but when all things come to pass, this is a barren cow, and so this poor man is deceived. The other fellow who sold the cow, thinks himself a jolly fellow, and a wise merchant, and he is called one that can make shift for himself. But I tell thee, whosoever thou art, do so if thou list; thou shalt do it at this price, thou shalt go to the devil, and there be hanged on the fiery gallows world without end; and thou art as very a thief as when thou takest a man's purse from him going by the way, and thou sinnest as well against this commandment, "Thou shalt do no theft." But these fellows commonly, who use such deceitfulness and guiles, can speak so finely, that a man would think butter should scarcely melt in their mouths.

I tell you one other falsehood: I know that some husbandmen go to the market with a quarter of corn: now they would fain sell the worst dear as well as the best, therefore they use this policy; they go and put a strike of fine malt or corn in the bottom of the sack, then they put two strikes of the worst that they have, then a good strike in the sack's mouth, and so they come to the market,

Now there comes a buyer, asking, "Sir, is this good malt?" "I warrant you," saith he, "there is no better in this town;" and so he sells all the malt or corn for the best, when there are but two strikes of the best in his sack. The man that buys it, thinks he has good malt, he comes home: when he puts the malt out of the sack, the strike which was in the bottom covers the ill malt which was in the midst, and so the good man never perceives the fraud, till he comes to use the corn: the other man that sold it, thinks this is policy, but it is theft before God, and he is bound to make restitution of so much as those two strikes which were naught, were sold for too dear; so much he ought to restore, or else he shall never come to heaven, if God is true in his word.

I could tell you of another falsehood, how they make wool to weigh much, but I will not tell it you. If you learn to do those falsehoods whereof I have told you now, then take the sauce with it; namely, that you shall never see the bliss of heaven, but be damned, world without end, with the devil and all his angels. Now go when it please you, use falsehood! But I pray you, wherefore will you deceive your neighbour, whom you ought to love as well as your own self? Consider the matter, good people, what a dangerous thing it is to fall into the hands of the ever-living God. Leave falsehood: abhor it, be true and faithful in your calling, "Seek the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof: then all things necessary for you, shall come unto you unlooked for."

Therefore in this petition, note first God's goodness, how gentle he is towards us, insomuch that he would have us to come unto him and take of him all things. Then again, note what we are, namely, beggars, for we beg of him; which admonishes us to leave stoutness and proudness, and to be humble.

Note what is, "our;" namely, that one prays for another, and that this storehouse is common unto all men.

Note again, what we are when we are false—the children of the devil, and enemies unto God.

There are some men who would have this petition not to import or contain these earthly things, as things which are too vile to be desired at God's hand; therefore they expound it altogether spiritually, of things pertaining unto the soul only, which opinion truly I do not greatly like; for shall I trust God for my soul, and shall I not trust him

for my body? Therefore I take it that all things necessary to soul and body are contained in this petition: and we ought to seek all things necessary for our bodily food, only in this storehouse.

But you must not take my sayings after such sort, as though you should do nothing but sit and pray, and yet you should have your dinner and supper made ready for you. No, not so; but you must labour, you must do the work of your vocation, "Seek the kingdom of heaven;" you must set those two things together, works and prayer. He that is true in his vocation, does according as God wills him to do, and then they pray unto God. That man or woman may be assured of their living; as sure, I say, as God is God. As for the wicked, indeed, God of his exceeding mercy and liberality provides for them; and sometimes they fare better than the good man does: but for all that the wicked man ever has an ill conscience. He doth wrong unto God, he is an usurper, he has no right unto it: the good and godly man he has a right unto it, for he comes by it lawfully, by his prayer and travail. But these covetous men, think you, say they this prayer with a faithful heart? "Our Father, which art in heaven; give us this day our daily bread;" think you they say it from the bottom of their hearts? No, no; they do but mock God, they laugh him to scorn, when they say these words. For they have their bread, their silver and gold in their coffers, in their chests, in their bags or budgets, therefore they have no savour of God; else they would show themselves liberal unto their poor neighbours, they would open their chests and bags, and lay out and help their brethren in Christ. They are as yet but scorners; they say this prayer as the Turk might say it.

Consider this word "Give;" certainly we must labour, yet we must not so magnify our labour as though we got our living by it. For labour as long as you will, you shall have no profit by it, except the Lord bless your labour. Therefore we must thank him for it; he doth it, he giveth it: to whom? "Unto him that laboureth and prayeth:" the man that is so disposed shall not lack, as he saith. "He will give the Holy Ghost unto them that desire the same." Then we must ask; for he gives not to sluggards. Indeed they have his benefits; they live wealthily; but as I told you before, they have it with an ill conscience, not lawfully. Therefore Christ saith, "He suffers his sun to

rise upon the just and unjust." Also, "We cannot tell outwardly by these worldly things, who are in the favour of God, and who are not:" for they are common unto good and bad; but the wicked have them not with a good conscience. The upright good man has his living through his labour and faithful prayer; beware that you trust not in your labour, as though you got your living by it: for, as St. Paul saith, "Neither he that planteth is aught, nor he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase." (1 Cor. iii.) Except God give the increase, all our labour is lost. They that are the children of this world, as covetous persons, extortioners, oppressors, caterpillars, usurers, think you they come to God's storehouse? No, no, they do not; they have not the understanding of it; they cannot tell what it means. For they look not to get their living at God's storehouse, but rather they think to get it with deceit and falsehood, with oppression and wrong doings. For they think, that all things are lawful unto them; therefore they think that though they take other men's goods through subtlety and craft, it is no sin.

But I tell you, those things which we buy, or get with our labour, or which are given us by inheritance, or otherways, those things are ours by the law, which maketh *meum* and *tuum* (mine and thine). Now all things gotten otherwise are not ours; as those things which are gotten by crafty conveyances,* by guile and fraud, by robbery and stealing, by extortion and oppression, by hand-making,† (or howsoever you come by it beside the right way,) it is not yours; insomuch that you may not give it for God's sake, for God hates it.

But you will say, What shall we do with the goods gotten by unlawful means? I tell thee, make restitution; which is the only way that pleases God. Oh, what bribery, falsehood, deceiving, false getting of goods there is in England! and yet for all that, we hear nothing of restitution; which is a miserable thing. I tell you, none of them which have taken their neighbour's goods from him by any manner of falsehood, none of them, I say, shall be saved, except they make restitution, either in affect or effect; in effect, when they are able: in affect,‡ when they are not able in any wise. Ezekiel saith, "When the

* Contrivances.
† Laying hands upon, or pilfering.
‡ Will or desire to do it.

ungodly doth repent, and restoreth the goods gotten wrongfully and unlawfully." For unlawful goods ought to be restored again: without restitution, look not for salvation. Also this is a true sentence used by St. Augustine, "Robbery, falsehood, or otherwise ill-gotten goods, cannot be forgiven of God, except they be restored again." Zaccheus, that good publican, that common officer, he gave good example unto all bribers and extortioners. I would that they all would follow his example; he exercised not open robbery, he killed no man by the way, but with craft and subtleties he deceived the poor. When the poor men came to him, he bade them to come again another day; and so delayed the time till at length he wearied poor men, and so got somewhat of them. Such fellows are now in our time very common; but they will not learn the second lesson. They have read the first lesson, how Zaccheus was a bribe-taker, but they will not read the second; they say A, but they will not say B. What is the second lesson? "If I have deceived any man, I will restore it fourfold." But we may argue that they are not such as Zaccheus was, for we hear nothing of restitution; they lack right repentance.

It is a wonderful thing to see, that Christian people will live in such a state, wherein they know themselves to be condemned; for when they go to bed, they go in the name of the devil. Finally, whatsoever they do, they do it in his name, because they are out of the favour of God. God loves them not. Therefore, I say, it is to be lamented that we hear nothing of restitution. St. Paul saith, "He that stole, let him steal no more." Which words teach us, that he who has stolen or deceived, and keeps it, he is a strong thief till he restore again the thing taken; and he shall look for no remission of his sins at God's hand, till he has restored again such goods.

There are some who say, repentance or contrition will serve; it is enough when I am sorry for it. Those fellows cannot tell what repentance means. Look upon Zaccheus, he repented, but restitution by and by followed. So let us do too; let us live uprightly and godly; and when we have done amiss, or deceived any body, let us make restitution: and afterwards beware of such sins, of such deceitfulness, but rather let us call upon God, and resort to his storehouse, and labour faithfully and truly for our livings. Whosoever is so disposed, him God will favour,

and he shall lack nothing. As for the other impenitent sluggards, they are devourers and usurpers of God's gifts, and therefore they shall be punished world without end in everlasting fire.

Remember this word "our;" what it means I told you. And here I have occasion to speak of the properties* of things: for I fear if I should leave it so, some of you would report me wrongfully, and affirm, that all things should be in common: I say not so. Certain it is, that God has ordained properties of things, so that what is mine, is not thine; and what thou hast I cannot take from thee. If all things were common, there could be no theft, and so this commandment, "Thou shalt not steal," were in vain; but it is not so. The laws of the realm make mine and thine. If I have things by those laws, then I have them well. But this you must not forget, that St. Paul saith, "Relieve the necessity of those which have need." Things are not so common that another man may take my goods from me, for this is theft; but they are so common, that we ought to distribute them unto the poor, to help them, and to comfort them with it: we ought one to help another; for this is a standing sentence, "He that hath the substance of this world, and shall see his brother to have need, and shutteth up his entire affection from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1 John iii.)

There was a certain manner of having things in common in the time of the apostles. For some good men, as Barnabas, sold their lands and possessions, and brought the money unto the apostles: but that was done for this cause; there were a great many of Christian people at that time treated very ill, insomuch that they left all their goods. Now such folk came to the apostles for aid and help; therefore those who were faithful men, seeing the poverty of their brethren, went and sold what they had, and spent the money amongst such poor as were newly made Christians. Amongst others who sold their goods, there was Ananias and Sapphira his wife, two very subtle persons, they went and sold their goods too, but they played a (worldly) wise part, they would not stand in danger of losing all their goods: therefore they agreed together and took a part from the money and laid it up; with the other part they came to Peter, affirming that to be the whole money. For they thought in their hearts—as all unfaithful

* Proprietorship, or rights of owners.

men do—we cannot tell how long this religion shall abide; it is good to be wise, and keep somewhat in store whatsoever shall happen.

Now Peter knowing by the Holy Ghost their falsehood, first slew him with one word, and afterwards her too; which indeed is a fearful example, whereby we should be admonished to beware of lies and falsehood. For though God punish thee not presently, as he did this Ananias, yet he shall find thee; surely, he will not forget thee. Therefore learn here to take heed of falsehood, and beware of lies. For this Ananias, this wilful Ananias, I say, because of this wilful lie, went to hell with his wife; and there shall be punished world without end; where you see what a grievous thing it is to make a lie. This Ananias needed not to sell his lands, he had no such commandment; but seeing he did so, and then came and brought but half the price, making a pretence, as though he had brought all, for that he was punished so grievously.

Oh what lies are made now-a-days in England, here and there in the markets; truly it is a pitiful thing that we consider it not. This one example of Ananias and Sapphira, and their punishment, is able to condemn the whole world. You have now heard *how* men had things in common in the first church: but St. Paul teaches us how things ought to be in common amongst us, saying, "Help the necessity of those which are poor." Our good is not so ours that we may do with it what we please; but we ought to distribute it unto them which have need. No man, as I told you before, ought to take away my goods from me, but I ought to distribute what I can spare, and help the poor withal. Saith St. Paul, "Distribute them unto the poor, let them lack nothing; but help them with such things as you may spare." For so it is written, "He that hath much, must make account for much; and if he have not spent it well, he must make the heavier account." But I speak not this to hinder poor folks from labour; for we must labour and do the works of our vocation, every one in his calling; for so it is written, "Thou shalt eat the labour of thy hand, and it shall go well with thee." That is to say, every man shall work for his living, and shall not be a sluggard, as a great many are: every man shall labour and pray, then God will send him his living. St. Paul saith, "He that laboureth not, let him not eat." Therefore those lubbers who will not labour, and might labour,

it is a good thing to punish them according unto the king's most godly statutes. For God himself saith, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread." Then cometh in St. Paul, who saith, "Let him labour the more, that he may have wherewith to help the poor." And Christ himself saith: "It is better to give than to take." So Christ and all his apostles, yea, the whole Scripture ever admonishes us concerning our neighbour, to take heed of him, to be pitiful unto him: but God knows there are a great many who care little for their neighbours. They do as Cain did, when God asked him, "Cain, where is thy brother Abel?" What, saith he, am I my brother's keeper? So these rich franklings,* these covetous fellows, they scrape all to themselves, they think they should care for nobody but themselves: God commandeth the poor man to labour the sorer, that he may be able to help his poor neighbour: how much more then ought the rich to be liberal unto them?

But you will say, Here is a marvellous doctrine, which commands nothing but "Give, give;" if I follow this doctrine, I shall give so much, that at length I shall have nothing left for myself. These are words of unbelief; he that speaks such words, is a faithless man. And I pray you tell me, have you heard of any man that came to poverty, because he gave unto the poor? have you heard tell of such a one? No, I am sure you have not. And I dare lay my head to pledge for it, that no man living has come, or shall hereafter come to poverty, because he has been liberal in helping the poor. For God is a true God, and no liar: he promises us in his word, that we shall have the more by giving to the needy. Therefore the way to get, is to scatter that which you have. Give, and you shall gain. If you ask me, How shall I get riches? I make thee this answer: Scatter that which thou hast, for giving, is gaining. But you must take heed, and scatter it according unto God's will and pleasure; that is, to relieve the poor withal, to scatter it amongst the flock of Christ; whosoever giveth so, shall surely gain; for Christ saith, "Give, and it shall be given unto you." It shall be given unto you. This is a sweet word, we can well away† with that; but how shall we come by it?—Give.

This is the way to get—to relieve the poor. Therefore

* A country landholder.
† Be well pleased.

it is a false and wicked proposition, to think that with giving unto the poor, we shall come to poverty. What a giver was Lot, that good man; came he to poverty through giving? No, no; he was a great rich man. Abraham, the father of all believers, what a liberal man was he!—insomuch that he sat by his door watching when any body went by the way, that he might call him, and relieve his necessity. What, came he to poverty? No, no: he died a great rich man. Therefore let us follow the example of Lot and Abraham: let us be liberal, and then we shall augment our stock. For this is a most certain and true word, "Give, and it shall be given unto you;" but we believe it not, we cannot away with it. The most part of us are more ready to take from the poor, than to relieve their poverty. They are so careful for their children, that they cannot tell when they are well; they purchase this house and that house, but what saith the prophet? "Wo be unto you that join house to house;" the curse of God hangeth over your heads. Christ saith, "He that loveth his father or mother, or children more than me, he is not meet for me." Therefore those who always scrape and gather for their children, and in the mean season forget the poor, whom God would have relieved, those, I say, regard their children more than God's commandments: for their children must be set up, and the poor miserable people are forgotten in the mean season.

There is a common saying amongst the worldlings; "Happy is that child whose father goeth to the devil:" but this is a worldly happiness. The same is seen when the child can begin with two hundred pounds, whereas his father began with nothing; it is a wicked happiness, if the father got those goods wickedly. And there is no doubt but many a father goes to the devil for his child's sake; because he neglected God's commandment, scraped for his child, and forgot to relieve his poor miserable neighbour.

We have in Scripture, "Whosoever hath pity over the poor, he lendeth unto God upon usury;" that is to say, God will give it unto him again, with increase: this is a lawful and godly usury.

Certain it is, that usury was allowed by the laws of this realm; yet it followed not that usury was godly, nor allowed before God. . . .

But I will tell you how you shall be usurers to get much gain. Give it unto the poor, then God will give it to you

with gain; give twenty-pence, and thou shalt have forty-pence. It shall come again, thou shalt not lose it, or else God is not God. What needs it to use such deceitfulness and falsehood to get riches? Take a lawful way to get them, that is, scatter this abroad which thou hast, and then thou shalt have it again, with great gains; "four times," saith Scripture. Now God's word saith, that I shall have again that which I laid out, with usury, with gain. Is it true what God saith? Yes. Then let me not think, that giving unto the poor diminishes my stock, when God saith the contrary; namely, that it shall increase; or else we make God a liar. For if I believe not his sayings, then by my infidelity I make him a liar, as much as is in me.

Therefore learn here to commit usury; and especially you rich men, you must learn this lesson well, for of you it is written: "Whosoever hath much, must make account for much:" and you have much, not to do with it what you lust, but you must spend it as God appoints you in his word to do: for no rich man can say before God, "This is my own." No, he is but an officer over it, an almoner, God's treasurer. Our Saviour saith, "Whosoever shall leave his field, shall receive it again a hundred fold." As, if I should be examined now by the papists, if they should ask me, believe you in the mass? I say, No; according unto God's word, and my conscience, it is naught, it is but deceitfulness, it is the devil's doctrine. Then I must go to prison, I leave all things behind me, wife and children, goods and land, and all my friends: I leave them for Christ's sake, in his quarrel.* What saith our Saviour unto it? "I shall have a hundred times so much." Now though this is spoken in such wise, yet it may be understood of alms-giving too. For that man or woman who can find in their hearts for God's sake to leave ten shillings or ten pounds, they shall have a hundred fold again in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting. If this will not move our hearts, then they are more than stony and flinty; then our damnation is just and well deserved.

For to give alms, it is like as when a man comes unto me, and desires an empty purse of me. I lend him the purse, he comes by and by and brings it full of money, and

* This was actually done by many in a very few years afterwards.

gives it to me: so that I now have my purse again, and the money too. So it is to give alms, we lend an empty purse and take a full purse for it. Therefore let us persuade ourselves in our hearts, that to give for God's sake, is no loss unto us, but great gain. And truly the poor man does more for the rich man in receiving things of him, than the rich does for the poor in giving them. For the rich gives only worldly goods, but the poor gives him by the promise of God all felicity.

"Daily." Here we learn to cast away all carefulness,* and to come to the storehouse of God, where we shall have all things competent both for our souls and bodies. Further, in this petition we desire that God will feed not only our bodies but also our souls: and so we pray for the office of preaching. For as the body must be fed daily with meat, so the soul requires her meat, which is the word of God. Therefore we here pray for all the clergy, that they may do their duties, and feed us with the word of God according to their calling. Now I have troubled you long, therefore I will make an end: I desire you will remember to resort to this storehouse. Whatsoever you have need of, come hither, here are all things necessary for your soul and body, only desire them. But you have heard how you must be apparelled; you must labour and do your duties, and then come, and you shall find all things necessary for you: and especially now at this time let us resort unto God, for it is a great drought, as we think, and we have need of rain. Let us therefore resort unto our loving Father, who promises, that when we call upon him with a faithful heart, he will hear us. Let us therefore desire him to rule the matter so, that we may have bodily sustenance. We have the example of Elias, whose prayer God heard: therefore let us pray this prayer, which our Saviour and Redeemer Jesus Christ himself taught us, saying, "Our Father which art in heaven," &c. *Amen.*

* Anxiety, apprehension.

THE

SIXTH SERMON

UPON

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATTHEW vi.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.

THIS is a very good prayer, if it is said in faith with the whole heart. None ever said it with the heart, but he had forgiveness, and his trespasses and all his sins were pardoned and taken from him. As touching the former petitions, I told you that many things were contained in them; which you may perceive partly by that I have said, and partly by gatherings and conjectures. Truly there is a great doctrine* in it, yet we think it but a light matter to understand the Lord's prayer, but it is a great thing. Therefore I would have you mark it well: but especially keep in your remembrance how our Saviour teaches us to know the liberality of God, how God has determined to help us; insomuch that we shall lack nothing, if we come to his treasure-house, where are locked up all things necessary for our souls and bodies.

Further, consider by the same petition that we are but beggars altogether. For the best of us have need to say daily, "Our Father, give us this day our daily bread." I would the proud and lofty fellows would consider this, namely, that they are but beggars, as St. Paul saith, "What have ye, that you have not gotten with begging?"

Yet above all things, I would have you to consider this word "our;" for in that word are contained great mysteries and much learning. All those that pray this prayer, that is to say, all Christian people, help me to get my living at God's hand; for when they say "our," they include me in their prayers.

* Much instruction.

Again, consider the remedy against carefulness,* which is, to trust in God, to hang upon him, to come to his treasure-house, and then to labour, and to do the works of our vocation: then undoubtedly God will provide for us, we shall not lack. Therefore learn to trust upon the Lord, and leave this wicked carefulness, whereof our Saviour admonishes us.

Especially I would have you to consider what a wicked opinion this is, to fancy that giving to the poor is a diminishing of our goods. I told you of late of the proprieties of things, how things are ours, and how they are not ours; all those things which we have, either by labour or by inheritance, or else by gifts, or else by buying, all those things which we have by such titles are our own; but yet not so that we may spend them according to our own pleasure. They are ours upon the condition that we shall spend them to the honour of God, and the relieving of our neighbours. And here I spake of restitution; how we ought to make amends unto that man whom we have deceived, or taken goods wrongfully from him. There are some men who think there is no other theft but taking purses, and killing men by the way, or stealing other men's goods: those men are much deceived; for there are "a great number of thieves."

What was this but a theft, when Isaiah saith, "Thy princes are infidels, and are companions with thieves." This was a theft, but it was not a common theft: it was a lordly theft: they could tell how to weary men, and so to take bribes of them. Such a one was Zaccheus; he robbed not men by the highway, but he was an oppressor, and forced men to pay more than they ought to pay; which his so doing was a theft, as much as if he had robbed men by the highway. There are many who follow Zaccheus in his wickedness, but there are few, or none at all, who will follow him in his goodness. "If I have deceived any man, I will pay it again fourfold." I would wish that all bribers and false tollers† would follow his example. But I tell you, without restitution there is no salvation: this is a certain sentence, allowed and approved, first, by the Holy Scripture; secondly, by all the writers that ever wrote upon Scripture; yea, the very school doctors, as bad as they were, yet they never contradicted that, but said "We ought to make resti-

* Anxiety. † Tax gatherers, or takers generally.

tution of a man's good name, and of his goods taken from him wrongfully:" that is to say, when we have slandered any body, we ought to make them amends. Also, when we have taken any man's goods wrongfully, we ought to make him amends; else we shall never be saved, for God abhorreth me, and all things that I do are abominable before him.

"Forgive!" Who is there in this world that hath not need to say, "Lord, forgive me?" No man living, nor ever was, or shall be, our Saviour only excepted: he was "an undefiled Lamb." I remember a verse which I learned almost forty years ago, which is this: *Sæpe precor mortem, mortemque deprecor idem*, in English, "I pray many times for death to come; and again I pray, that he shall not come." This verse puts a difference in *precor* and *deprecor; precor* is, when I would fain have a thing; *deprecor* is, when I would avoid it. Like as Elias the prophet when Jezebel had killed the prophets of the Lord, Elias being hidden in the mount, desired of God to die; and this is *precor*. Now *deprecor* is the contrary, when I would avoid the thing, then I use *deprecor*. Now in the Lord's prayer till this petition, we have been in *precor*, that is to say, we have desired things at God's hand. Now comes *deprecor*, I desire him now to remove those things which may do me harm: as sin, which doth harm: therefore I would have him take away my trespasses. Now who is there in the world, or ever has been, who has not need to say this *deprecor*, to desire God to take from him his sins; to "forgive him his trespasses." Truly, no saints in heaven, be they as holy as they may, yet they have had need of this *deprecor;* they have had need to say, "Lord, forgive us our trespasses." Now you ask wherein standeth our righteousness? Answer, in God's forgiving unto us our unrighteousness. Wherein standeth our goodness? In God's taking away our wickedness; so that our goodness standeth in His goodness.

In the other petition we desire all things necessary for our bodily life, as long as we are here in this world; "For every man hath a certain time appointed him of God, and God hideth that same time from us." For some die in young age, some in old age, according as it pleases him. He has not manifested to us the time, because he would have us ready at all times: else if I knew the time, I should presume upon it, and so should be worse. But he would have us ready at all times, and therefore he hides

the time of our death from us. And it is a common saying, "There come as many skins of calves to the market, as of bulls or kine." But we may be sure, there shall not fall one hair from our head without his will; and we shall not die before the time that God has appointed unto us; which is a comfortable thing, specially in time of sickness or wars. For there are many men who are afraid to go to war, and to do the king service, for fear they shall be slain.

Also vicars and parsons are afraid when there comes a sickness in the town; therefore they were wont commonly to get out of the way, and send a friar thither, who did nothing else but rob and spoil them: which doings of the vicar were damnable; for it was diffidence and mistrust in God. Therefore, ye vicars, parsons, or curates, what name soever you bear, when there comes any sickness in your town, leave not your flock without a pastor, but comfort them in their distress; and believe certainly that with your well-doings you cannot shorten your lives. Likewise, you subjects, when you are commanded by the king, or his officers, to go to war, to fight against the king's enemies; go with a good heart and courage, not doubting but that God will preserve you, and that you cannot shorten your life with well-doing. Peradventure God has appointed you to die there, or to be slain; happy are you when you die in God's quarrel. For to fight against the king's enemies, being called unto it by the magistrates, is God's service: therefore when you die in that service with a good faith, happy are you.

There are some who say, when their friends are slain in battle, O, if he had tarried at home he would not have lost his life! These sayings are wrong: for God hath appointed every man his time. To go to war in presumptuousness, without an ordinary calling, such going to war I allow not: but when you are called, go in the name of the Lord; and be well assured in your heart, that you cannot shorten your life with well-doing.

"Forgive us;" Here we sue for our pardon: and so we acknowledge ourselves to be offenders. For the unguilty need no pardon. This pardon, or remission of sins is so necessary that no man can be saved without it. Therefore of remission standeth the Christian man's life; for so saith David, "Who is blessed of God? He whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered." He saith not;

Blessed are they who have never sinned: for where dwell such as have never sinned? Truly, nowhere; they are not to be gotten. Here the prophet signifies that all we are sinners; for he saith, "whose sins are pardoned." And here we are painted out in our colours, else we should be proud; and so he saith in the gospel, "Forasmuch as we be all evil." There he gives us our own title and name, calling us wicked and ill. There is neither man nor woman that can say they have no sin; for we are all sinners. But how can we hide our sins? The blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ hideth our sins and washeth them away. And though one man had done all the world's sins since Adam's time, yet he may be remedied by the blood of Jesus Christ; if he believe in him he shall be cleansed from all his sins. Therefore all our comfort is in him, in his love and kindness. For St. Paul saith, "Charity covereth the multitude of sins." So it doth indeed;—the love of our Saviour Jesus Christ, his love towards us covers and takes away all our sins; insomuch that almighty God shall not condemn us, and the devil shall not prevail against us. Our nature is ever to hide sin, and to cloak it; but this is a wicked hiding, and this hiding will not serve: "He seeth our wickedness," and he will punish it; therefore our hiding cannot serve us. But if you are disposed to hide your sins, I will tell you how you shall hide them.

First, acknowledge them, and then believe in our Saviour Christ, put him in trust withal; he will pacify his Father; for "to that end he came into the world to save sinners." This is the right way to hide sins, not to go and excuse them, or to make them no sins. No, no; the prophet saith, "Blessed is that man to whom the Lord imputeth not his sins." (Psal. xxxii.) He saith not, Blessed is he that did never sin; but blessed is he to whom sin is not imputed.

And so here in this petition we pray for remission of our sins, which is so requisite to the beginning of the spiritual life, that no man can come thereto, except he pray for remission of his sins; which standeth in Christ our Redeemer: he hath washed and cleansed our sins; by him we shall be clean. But how shall we come to Christ? How shall we have him? I hear that he is beneficial, as Scripture witnesses, "There is full and plenteous redemption by him." But how shall I get that? How shall I come unto it? Truly by faith: faith is the hand where-

with we receive his benefits; therefore we must needs have faith. But how shall we obtain faith? Faith indeed brings Christ, and Christ brings remission of sins: but how shall we obtain faith? Answer, St. Paul teaches us this, saying, "Faith cometh by hearing God's word." Then if we will come to faith, we must hear God's word: if we must hear God's word, then we must have preachers who are able to tell us God's word. And so it appears, that in this petition we pray for preachers; we pray unto God, that he will send men amongst us who may teach us the way of everlasting life.

Truly it is a pitiful thing to see schools so neglected, scholars not maintained, every true Christian ought to lament the same. But I have a good hope, since God has done greater things in taking away and extirpating all popery,* that he will send us a remedy for this matter too. I hope he will put into the magistrate's heart to consider these things; for by this office of preaching God sendeth faith. This office is the office of salvation; "for it hath pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save the believers." So, I say, we pray for this office which brings faith; faith brings to Christ; Christ brings remission of sins; remission of sins brings everlasting life.

Oh this is a godly prayer, which we ought at all times to say, for we sin daily; therefore we had need to say daily, "Forgive us our trespasses;" and, as David saith, "Lord, enter not into judgment with thy servant;" for we are not able to abide his judgment. If it were not for this pardon, which we have in our Saviour Jesus Christ, we should all perish eternally. For when this word, "Forgive," was spoken with a good faith, and with a penitent heart, there never was a man but he was heard. If Judas, that traitor, had said it with a good faith, it should have saved him; but he forgot that point; he was taught it indeed, our Saviour himself taught him to pray so, but he forgot it again. Peter remembered that point: he cried, "Lord, forgive me;" and so he obtained his pardon, and so shall we do: for we are ever in that case, that we have need to say, "Lord, forgive us;" for we ever do amiss.

But here is one addition, one hanger on; "As we forgive them that trespass against us." What means this? Indeed it sounds according to the words, as though we might or

* This was said in the reign of king Edward VI.

should merit remission of our sins by our forgiving: as for an example; that man hath done unto me a foul turn, he hath wronged me; at length he acknowledges his folly, and comes to me, and desires me to forgive him; I forgive him. Do I now, in forgiving my neighbour his sins which he has done against me, do I, I say, deserve or merit at God's hand forgiveness of my own sins? No, no; God forbid: for if this should be so, then farewell Christ, it takes him quite away, it diminishes his honour, and it is very treason wrought against Christ. This has been in times past taught openly in the pulpits and in the schools, but it was very treason against Christ; for in him only, and in nothing else, neither in heaven nor in earth, is remission of our sins; unto him only pertaineth this honour. For remission of sins, wherein consists everlasting life, is such a treasure that it passes all men's doings: it must not be our merits that shall serve, but his; he is our comfort—it is the majesty of Christ, and his blood-shedding that cleanses us from our sins. Therefore whosoever is minded contrary unto this, "he robbeth Christ of his majesty," and so casts himself into everlasting danger. For though the works which we do are good outwardly, and God is pleased with them, yet they are not perfect; for we believe imperfectly, we love imperfectly, we suffer imperfectly, not as we ought to do; and so all things that we do are done imperfectly. But our Saviour has so remedied the matter, and taken away our imperfectness, that they are counted now before God most perfect and holy, not for our own sake, but for his sake; and though they are not perfect yet they are taken for perfect: and so we come to perfectness by him. So you see as touching our salvation, we must not go to working, to think to get everlasting life with our own doings. No, this were to deny Christ's salvation, and remission of sins, which is his gift, his own free gift. As touching our good works which we do; God will reward them in heaven, but they cannot get heaven. Therefore let every man do well, for he shall be well rewarded; but let them not think that they with their doings may get heaven; for so doing is a robbing of Christ.

What shall we learn now by this addition, where we say, "As we forgive them that trespass against us?" I tell you this addition is put unto it not without great cause; for our Saviour, being a wise and perfect teacher, would speak no words in vain. This addition is put unto it to be

a certain and sure token unto us, whether we have the true faith in our hearts or no. For faith, the right faith, I say, consists not in the knowledge of the stories; to believe the stories written in the New and Old Testament is not the lively faith which brings salvation. For the devil himself believes the stories, and yet is, and shall be damned world without end. Therefore we must have the right faith, the lively faith, the faith that brings salvation, which consists in believing that Christ died for my sins' sake. With such a faith I draw him unto me, with all his benefits. I must not stand in generalities, as to believe that Christ suffered under Pontius Pilate, but I must believe that it was done for my sake, to redeem with his passion* my sins, and all theirs who believe and trust in him. If I believe so, then I shall not be deceived.

But this faith is a hard thing to be had, and many a man thinks himself to have that faith, when he has nothing less. Therefore I will tell you how you shall prove whether you have the right faith or not, lest you be deceived with a phantasy of faith, as many are. Therefore prove thyself on this wise; here is a man who has done me wrong, has taken away my living or my good name, he has slandered me, or otherwise hurt me; now at length he comes unto me, and acknowledges his faults and trespasses, and desires me to forgive him: if I now feel myself ready and willing to forgive him, from the bottom of my heart, all things that he has done against me, then I may be assured that I have the lively faith; yea, I may be assured that God will forgive me my sins, for Christ his Son's sake. But when my neighbour comes unto me, confessing his folly, and desiring forgiveness: if I then am sturdy and proud, if my heart is flinty, and my stomach bent against him, insomuch that I refuse his request, and have an appetite to be avenged upon him; if I have such a sturdy stomach, then I may pronounce against myself, that I have not that lively faith in Christ which cleanses my sins. It is a sure token that I am not of the number of the children of God as long as I abide in this sturdiness.

There is no good person but is slandered or injured by one means or another, and commonly it is seen that those who live most godly have in this world the greatest rebukes; they are slandered and backbitten, and divers ways vexed by the wicked. Therefore thou, whosoever thou art, that

* Sufferings.

sufferest such wrongs, either in thy goods and substance, or in thy good name and fame, examine thyself; go into thy heart, and if thou canst find in thy heart to forgive all thy enemies whatsoever they have done against thee, then thou mayest be sure that thou art one of the flock of God; yet thou must beware, as I said before, that thou think not to get heaven by such remitting of thy neighbour's ill-doings. But by such forgiving, or not forgiving, thou shalt know whether thou hast faith or not. Therefore if we have a rebellious stomach, and a flinty heart against our neighbour, so that we are minded to avenge ourselves upon him, and so take upon us God's office, who saith, "Yield unto me the vengeance, and I shall recompense them;" (Heb. x. Deut. xxxii.) as I told you, we are not of the flock of Christ. For it is written, "Whosoever saith, I love God, and hateth his brother, that man or woman is a liar;" (1 John iv.) for it is impossible for me to love God and hate my neighbour. And our Saviour saith, "When you will pray, forgive first;" else it is to no purpose, you get nothing by your prayer. Likewise we see in the parable of that king who called his servants to make an account, and pay their debts, where he remitted one of them a great sum of money: now that same fellow, whom the Lord pardoned, went out and took one of his fellow-servants by the neck, and handled him most cruelly, saying, "Give me my money." He had forgotten, belike, that his Lord had forgiven him.

Now the other servants seeing his cruelty came unto the king, and told him how that man used his fellow so cruelly. The Lord called him again, and after great rebukes cast him into prison, there to lie till he had paid the last farthing. Upon that our Saviour saith, "Thus will my heavenly Father also do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother even from your hearts." (Matt. xviii.) Therefore let us take heed by that wicked servant who would not forgive his fellow-servant when he desired of him forgiveness, saying, "Have patience with me, saith he, and I will pay thee all my debts." But we cannot say so unto God; we must only call for pardon.

There are many persons who, when they are sick, they say, "Oh that I might live but one year longer, to make amends for my sins;" which saying is very naught and ungodly; for we are not able to make amends for our sins; only Christ; he is "the Lamb of God which taketh away

our sins." Therefore when we are sick we should say; "Lord God, thy will be done; if I can do any thing to thy honour and glory, Lord, suffer me to live longer, but thy will be done." As for satisfaction, we cannot do the least piece of it.

You have heard now how we ought to be willing to forgive our neighbours their sins, which is a true token that we are children of God: to this our Saviour also exhorts us, saying, "If thou offerest therefore thy gift before the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath somewhat against thee, leave thou thy gift there before the altar, and go first and be reconciled unto thy brother." (Matt. v.) Leave it there, saith our Saviour, if thy brother have any thing against thee: go not about to sacrifice to me, but first above all things go and reconcile thyself unto thy brother. In such a manner St. Paul also exhorts us, saying, "I would have men to pray without anger and disputation." There are many wranglers and brawlers now-a-days, which do not well; they shall well know that they are not in the favour of God; God is displeased with them; let us, therefore, give up ourselves to prayer, so that we may love God and our neighbour. It is a very godly prayer to say, "Lord, forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us."

But there are peradventure some of you who will say, 'The priest can absolve me and forgive me my sins.' Sir, I tell thee, the priest or minister, call him what you will, has power given unto him from our Saviour to absolve in such wise as he is commanded by him; but I think ministers are not greatly troubled therewith; for the people seek their carnal liberties, which indeed is not well, and a thing which displeases God. For I would have those who are grieved in conscience, go to some godly man, who is able to minister God's word, and there to fetch their absolution, if they cannot be satisfied in the public sermon; it were truly a thing which would do much good. But to say the truth, there is a great fault in the priests, for they, for the most part, are unlearned and wicked; and rather seek means and ways to wickedness than to godliness: but a godly minister, who is instructed in the word of God, can and may absolve in open preaching; not of his own authority, but in the name of God: for God saith, "I am he that cleanseth thy sins." But I may absolve you as an officer of Christ, in the open pulpit in this manner: "As

many as confess their sins unto God, acknowledging themselves to be sinners, and believe that our Saviour through his passion hath taken away their sins, and have an earnest purpose to leave sin; as many, I say, as are so affectioned, I, as an officer of Christ, as his treasurer, absolve you, in his name." This is the absolution which I can make by God's word.

Again, as many as will stand in defence of their wickednesses, will not acknowledge them, nor purpose to leave them, and so have no faith in our Saviour, to be saved by him through his merit; to them I say, "I bind you;" and I doubt not but they shall be bound in heaven: for they are the children of the devil, as long as they are in such unbelief, and purpose to sin.

Here you see how, and in what manner a preacher may absolve or bind: but he cannot do it of fellowship or worldly respect. No, in no wise—he must do it according as Christ hath commanded him. If God now command to forgive him that sinneth against me, how much more must I be reconciled to him whom I have offended? I must go unto him, and desire him to forgive me, I must acknowledge my fault, and so humble myself before him. Here a man might ask a question, saying, What if a man has offended me grievously, and has hurt me in my goods, or slandered me, and is sturdy in it, if he stands in defence of himself and his own wickedness, and will not acknowledge himself, shall I forgive him? Answer—Truly, God himself does not so, he forgiveth not sins, except the sinner acknowledge himself, confess his wickedness, and cry to him for mercy. Now I am sure, God requires no more at our hands than he himself does. Therefore I will say this—If thy neighbour or any man hath done evil against thee, and will not confess his faults, but wickedly defends the same, I, for my own discharge, must put away all rancour and malice out of my heart, and be ready, as far as I am able, to help him; if I do so, I am discharged before God, but so is not he. For truly that sturdy fellow shall make a heavy account before the righteous Judge.

Here I have occasion to speak against the Novatians,*

* Novatus lived in the third century. His followers held, that those who had once fallen from the faith, by persecution or otherwise, ought not to be received again into the church, although they afterwards repented.

who deny remission of sins. Their opinion was, that he who came once to Christ, and had received the Holy Ghost, and after that sinned again, should never come to Christ again, his sins should never be forgiven him; which opinion is most erroneous and wicked, yea, and quite against Scripture. For if it should be so, there would nobody be saved; for there is no man but sinneth daily. I told you how you should understand those two places of Scripture, which seem to be very hard, "There is no sacrifice," &c. As concerning the sin against the Holy Ghost, we cannot judge beforehand, but afterwards. I know now that Judas sinned against the Holy Ghost, also Nero, Pharaoh, and one Franciscus Spira,* which man had forsaken popery, and done very boldly in God's quarrel: at the length he was complained of, the Holy Ghost moved him in his heart to stick unto it, and not to forsake God's word; he, contrary to that admonition of the Holy Ghost, denied the word of God, and so finally died in desperation: him I may pronounce to have sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost. . But I will show you a remedy for the sin against the Holy Ghost. Ask remission of sin in the name of Christ, and then I ascertain you,† that you sin not against the Holy Ghost. For "the mercy of God far exceedeth our sins."

I have heard tell of some, who when they said this petition, perceived that they asked of God forgiveness, like as they themselves forgive their neighbours; and again, perceiving themselves so unapt to forgive their neighbour's faults, came to that point, that they would not say this prayer at all; but took our Lady's Psalter‡ in hand, and such fooleries, thinking they might then do unto their neighbour a foul turn with a better conscience, than if they said this petition: for here they wish the vengeance of God upon their own heads, if they bear grudge in their hearts, and say this petition. But if we will be right Christians, let us set aside all hatred and malice, let us live godly, and

* About the year 1548, lived at Padua Francis Spira, an advocate, who when he was about forty-four years of age, became a convert to Luther's doctrines, which he defended strenuously, and thereby made many converts. The priests, upon this, brought him before the pope's legate at Venice, who persuaded Spira to abjure and return to popery. After this the unhappy man fell into a deep melancholy, and died in absolute despair.

† Assure you.

‡ A popish service, repeating the "Hail Mary," &c.

forgive our enemies; so that we may from the bottom of our hearts say, "Our Father, which art in heaven, forgive us our trespasses." There are some who when they say, "Forgive us our trespasses," think that God will forgive the guilt only and not the pain; and therefore they believe that they shall go into purgatory, and there be cleansed from their sins: which thing is not so; they are liars who teach such doctrine. For God forgives us both the pain and the guiltiness of sins; as it appeared in David when he repented, Nathan said unto him, "The Lord hath taken away thy wickedness." But they will say, God took away the guilt of his sins, but not the pain; for he punished him afterward. Sir, you must understand that God punished him; but not to the end that he should make satisfaction and amends for his sins, but for a warning. God would give him a warning, therefore he punished him. So likewise, whosoever is a repentant sinner, as David was, and believes in Christ, he is clean, both from the pain and guiltiness of his sins; yet God punishes sins, to make us to remember and beware of sins.

Now to make an end; you have heard how needful it is for us to cry unto God for forgiveness of our sins, where you have heard, wherein forgiveness of our sins standeth, namely, in Christ the Son of the living God. Again, I told you how you should come to Christ, namely, by faith, and faith comes through hearing the word of God.

Remember then this addition, "As we forgive them that trespass against us;" which is a sure token whereby we may know whether we have the true faith in Christ or not. And here you learn, that it is a good thing to have an enemy, for we may use him to our great advantage: through him or by him, we may prove ourselves, whether we have the true faith or not.

Now I shall desire you yet again to pray unto Almighty God, that he will send such weather, whereby the fruits of the field may increase, for we think we have need of rain. Let us therefore call upon him, who knows what is best for us: Therefore say with me the Lord's prayer, as he himself hath taught us; "Our Father, which art," &c.

THE

SEVENTH SERMON

UPON

THE LORD'S PRAYER.

MATTHEW vi.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

IN the former petition, where we say, "Forgive us our trespasses," we fetch remedies for sins past: for we must needs have forgiveness, we cannot remedy the matter of ourselves, our sins must be remedied by pardon—by remission; other righteousness we have not, except the forgiving our unrighteousness—our goodness standeth in the forgiving of our wickedness.

All mankind must cry for pardon, and acknowledge themselves to be sinners, except our Saviour, who was clean without spot of sin. Therefore when we feel our sins, we must with a penitent heart resort hither, and say, "Our Father, which art in heaven, forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." Mark well this addition, "as we forgive them that trespass," for our Saviour puts the same unto it, not that we should merit any thing by it, but rather prove our faith, whether we are of the faithful flock of God, or not. For the right faith abides not in the man that is disposed purposely to sin, to hate his even Christian,* or to do other manner of sins. For whosoever purposely sins against his conscience, has lost the Holy Ghost, the remission of sins, and finally Christ himself. But when we are fallen so, we must fetch them again at God's hand by this prayer, which is a storehouse: here we shall find remission of our sins.

And though we are risen ever so well, yet when we fall

* Fellow-Christian.

again, when we sin again, what remedy then? What avails it to me to be risen once, and fall by and by into the self-same sin again, which is a renewing of the other sins? For whosoever has done wickedly an act against God, and afterward is sorry for it, cries to God for mercy, and so obtains forgiveness of the same sin, if by and by, willingly and wittingly, he does the self-same sin again, he renews by so doing all those sins which before time were forgiven him. Which thing appears by the lord, that took reckoning of his servants, where he found one who owed him a great sum of money; the lord pitied him, and remitted him all the debt. Now that same man afterwards showed himself unthankful and wicked; therefore the lord called him, and cast him into prison, there to lie till he had paid the uttermost farthing, notwithstanding that he had forgiven him before, &c.

So we see the guiltiness of the former sins turn again, when we do the same sins again. Seeing then that it is so dangerous a thing to fall into sin again, we had need to have some remedy, some help, that we might avoid sin, and not fall thereto again: therefore here follows this petition, "Lead us not into temptation."

Here we have a remedy, here we desire God that he will preserve us from falling into sin. Our Saviour, that loving teacher, knew whereof we had need, therefore he teaches us to beg preservation from God, that we fall not; "Lead us not into temptation;" that is to say, "Lord God, lead us not into trial, for we shall soon be overcome, but preserve us, suffer us not to sin again, let us not fall, help us, that sin get not the victory over us."

And this is a necessary prayer; for what is it we can do? Nothing at all but sin. And therefore we have need to pray unto God, that he will preserve and keep us in the right way; for our enemy the devil is an unquiet spirit, ever lying in the way, seeking occasion how to bring us to ungodliness. Therefore it appears how much we have need of the help of God: for the devil is an old enemy, a fellow of great antiquity, he has endured this five thousand and fifty-two years; in which space he has learned all arts and cunnings, he is a great practiser, there is no subtlety but he knows the same. As an artificer who is cunning and expert in his craft, and knows how to go to work, how to do his business the readiest way; so the devil knows all ways how to tempt us, and to give us an overthrow; inso-

much that we cannot begin or do any thing, but he is at our heels, and works some mischief, whether we are in prosperity or adversity, whether we are in health or sickness, life or death; he knows how to use the same to his purpose.

As for an example: when a man is rich, and of great substance, the devil setteth upon him with his crafts, intending to bring him to mischief: and so he moves him to despise and contemn God, and to make his riches his God. Yea, he can put such pride into the rich man's heart, that he thinks himself able to bring all things to pass; and so begins to oppress his neighbour with his riches. But God by his holy word warns us, and arms us against such crafts and subtleties of the devil, saying, "If riches come upon you, set not your hearts upon them." (Ps. lxii.) He commands us not to cast them away, but not to set our hearts upon them, as wicked men do. For to be rich is a gift of God, if riches are rightly used; but the devil is so wily, he stirs up rich men's hearts to abuse them.

Again, when a man falls into poverty, so that he lacks things necessary to sustain this bodily life: lo, the devil is ever ready at hand to take occasion by that poverty to bring him to mischief. For he will move and stir up the heart of the man that is in poverty—not to labour and calling upon God—but rather to stealing and robbing; notwithstanding God forbids such sins in his laws: or else at least he will bring him to use deceit and falsehood with his neighbour; intending that way to bring him to everlasting destruction.

Further, when a man is in honour and dignity, and in great estimation, this serpent sleepeth not, but is ready to give him an overthrow. For though honour is good unto those who come lawfully by it, and though it is a gift of God, yet the devil will move that man's heart who hath honour, to abuse his honour; for he will make him lofty, and high-minded, and fill his heart full of ambition, so that he will ever have a desire to come higher and higher: and all those who will withstand him, shall be hated, or ill entreated at his hand: and at length he shall be so poisoned with this ambition, that he shall forget all humanity and godliness, and consequently fall into the fearful hands of God. Such a fellow is the devil, that old doctor.

If it come to pass that a man fall into open ignominy

and shame, so that he shall be nothing regarded before the world: then the devil is at hand, moving and stirring his heart to irksomeness, and at length to desperation.

If he be young and lusty, the devil will put into his heart, and say to him, "What? thou art in thy flower, man; take thy pleasure; make merry with thy companions; remember the old proverb, 'Young saints, old devils:'" which proverb in very deed is naught and deceitful, and the devil's own invention; who would have parents negligent in bringing up their children in goodness: he would rather see them brought up in idleness and wickedness, therefore he found out such a proverb, to make them careless about their children. But, as I said before, this proverb is naught, for look commonly where children are brought up in wickedness, they will be wicked all their lives after; and therefore we may say thus, "Young devil, old devil; young saints, old saints; the cask will long savour of that liquor that is first put into it." And here appears how the devil can use the youth of a young man to his destruction, by exhorting him to follow the fond* lusts of that age.

Likewise, when a man comes to age, that old serpent will not leave him, but he is ever stirring him from one mischief unto the other, from one wickedness to another; and commonly he moves old folks to avarice and covetousness: for then old folks will commonly say, by the inspiration of the devil, "Now it is time for me to lay up, to keep in store somewhat for me, that I may have wherewith to live when I shall be a cripple;" and so under this colour† they set all their hearts and minds only upon this world, forgetting their poor neighbour whom God would have relieved by them. But, as I told you before, this is the devil's invention and subtlety, who blinds their eyes so, and withdraws their hearts so far from God, that it is scarcely possible for some to be brought again: for they have set all their hearts and phantasies in such wise upon their goods, that they cannot suffer any body to occupy their goods, while they themselves use it not; to the verifying of this common sentence: 'The covetous man lacketh as well those things which he hath, as those things which he hath not.' So likewise when we are in health, the devil moves us to all wickedness and naughtiness, to lechery,

* Foolish. † Pretence.

theft, and other horrible sins, putting quite out of our minds the remembrance of God and his judgments; insomuch that we forget that we shall die.

Again, when we are in sickness, he goes about like a lion, to move and stir us up to impatience and murmuring against God; or else he makes our sins so horrible before us that we fall into desperation. And so it appears that there is nothing either so high or low, so great or small, but the devil can use that self-same thing, as a weapon to fight against us withal, as with a sword. Therefore our Saviour, knowing the crafts and subtleties of our enemy the devil, how he goes about day and night, without intermission, to seek our destruction, teaches us here to cry unto God our heavenly Father for aid and help, for a subsidy* against this strong and mighty enemy, against the prince of this world; as St. Paul disdained not to call him; for he knew his power and subtle conveyances. Without doubt St. Paul had some experience of him.

Here by this petition when we say, "Lead us not into temptation;" we learn to know our own impossibility and infirmity; namely, that we are not able of our own selves to withstand this great and mighty enemy the devil. Therefore here we resort to God, desiring him to help and defend us, whose power surpasseth the strength of the devil. So it appears that this is a most needful petition, for when the devil is busy about us, and moves us to do against God, and his holy laws and commandments, we should ever have in remembrance whither to go, namely, to God, acknowledging our weakness, that we are not able to withstand the enemy. Therefore we ought always to say, "Our Father, which art in heaven; lead us not into temptation."

This petition, "Lead us not into temptation," the meaning of it is—Almighty God, we desire thy holy majesty to stand by and with us, with thy Holy Spirit, so that temptation overcome us not, but that we, through thy goodness and help, may vanquish and get the victory over it; for it is not in our power to do it: thou, O God, must help us to strive and fight.

It is with this petition, "Lead us not into temptation," even as much as St. Paul saith, "Let not sin reign in your corruptible body." He does not require that we shall have no sin, for that is impossible unto us; but he requires that

* Assistance. A subsidy was a grant of money.

we be not servants unto sin, that we give not place unto it, that sin rule not in us. And this is a commandment, we are commanded to forsake and hate sin, so that it may have no power over us. Now we should turn this commandment into a prayer, and desire of God that he will keep us, that he will not lead us into temptation; that is to say, that he will not suffer sin to have the rule and governance over us, and so we shall say with the prophet, "Lord, rule and govern thou me in the right way." And so we shall turn God's commandment into a prayer, to desire of him help to do his will and pleasure; as St. Augustine saith, "Give that thou commandest, and then command what thou wilt." As if we said—If thou wilt command only and not give, then we shall be lost, we shall perish.

Therefore we must desire him to rule and govern all our thoughts, words, acts, and deeds, so that no sins bear rule in us; we must require him to put his helping hand to us, that we may overcome temptation, and not temptation us. This I would have you consider, that every morning when you rise from your bed, you would say these words with a faithful heart and earnest mind: "Lord, rule and govern me so, order my ways so, that sin get not the victory of me, that sin rule me not, but let thy Holy Ghost inhabit my heart." And especially when any man goeth about a dangerous business, let him ever say, "Lord, rule thou me; keep me in thy custody." So this is the first point, which you shall note in this petition, namely, to turn the commandments of God into a prayer. He commands us to leave sins, to avoid them, to hate them, to keep our heart clean from them; then let us turn his commandment into a prayer, and say, "Lord, lead us not into temptation;" that is to say, Lord, keep us, that the devil prevail not against us, that wickedness get not the victory over us.

You shall not think that it is an ill thing to be tempted—to fall into temptations.* No, for it is a good thing, and Scripture commends it, and we shall be rewarded for it. For St. James saith, "Blessed is that man that suffereth temptations patiently." Blessed is he that *suffereth;* not he that *followeth*, not he that *is led* by them, and *followeth* the motions thereof. The devil moves me to do this thing and that, which is against God. Now this is a good thing; for if I withstand his motions, and regard God more

* Or trials.

than his suggestions, happy am I, and I shall be rewarded for it in heaven.

Some think that St. Paul desired to be without such temptations, but God would not grant his request. "Be content, Paul, to have my favour." For temptations are a declaration of God's favour and might: for though we are most weak and feeble, yet through our weakness God vanquishes the great strength and might of the devil. And afterwards he promises us we shall have "the crown of life;" that is to say, we shall be rewarded in everlasting life. To whom did God promise the crown of life—everlasting life? Truly, "unto them that love him;" saith St. James, not unto those who love themselves, and follow their own affections; it is an amphibologia,* and therefore Erasmus turneth it into Latin with such words, *A quibus dilectus est Deus, non diligentibus se*, "them that love him," into these words, "Not they that love themselves, but they of whom God is beloved: for self-love is the root of all mischief and wickedness."

Here you may perceive who are those which love God, namely, they that fight against temptations and assaults of the devil. For this life is a warfare, as St. John saith, "The life of man is but a warfare:" not that we should fight and brawl one with another. No, not so, but we should fight against the Jebusites that are within us. We may not fight one with another, to avenge ourselves, and to satisfy our irefulness,† but we should fight against the ill motions which rise up in our hearts against the law of God. Therefore remember that our life is a warfare, let us be contented to be tempted. There are some who, when they fall into temptations, find it so irksome that they give place, they will fight no more. Again, there are some so weary that they rid themselves out of this life, but this is not well done: they do not after St. James's mind, for he saith, "Blessed is he that suffereth temptation, and taketh it patiently." Now, if he is blessed that suffers temptation, then it follows, that he who curses and murmurs against God, being tempted, that man is cursed in the sight of God, and so shall not enjoy everlasting life.

Further, it is a necessary thing to be tempted‡ of God; for how should we know whether we have the love of God

* A discourse of doubtful or uncertain meaning.
† Wrath. ‡ Or tried.

in our hearts or not, except we are tried, except God tempt and prove us? Therefore the prophet David saith, "Lord, prove me, and tempt me." (Ps. cxxxix.) This prophet knew that to be tempted of God is a good thing; for temptations minister to us occasion to run to God, and to beg his help. Therefore David was desirous to have something whereby he might exercise his faith. For there is nothing so dangerous in the world, as to be without trouble, without temptation;* for look when we are best at ease, when all things go with us according to our will and pleasure, then we are commonly furthest off from God. For our nature is so feeble, that we cannot bear tranquillity, we soon forget God; therefore we should say, "Lord, prove me, and tempt me."

I have read once a story of a good bishop, who rode by the way, and was weary; being far off from any town, and seeing a fair house, a great man's house, he went thither, and was very well and honourably received: there were great preparations made for him and a great banquet, all things were in plenty. Then the man of the house set out his prosperity, and told the bishop what riches he had, in what honour and dignities he was, how many fair children he had, what a virtuous wife God had provided for him; so that he had no lack of any manner of thing; he had no trouble or vexations, neither inward nor outward. Now this holy bishop hearing the good estate of that man, called one of his servants, and commanded him to make ready the horses; for the bishop thought that God was not in that house, because there was no temptation there: he took his leave, and went his way. When he was two or three miles off, he remembered his book which he had left behind him: he sent his man back again to fetch that book; and when the servant came again, the house was sunk and all that was in it.

Here it appears, that it is a good thing to have temptation. This man thought himself a jolly† fellow, because all things went well with him: but he knew not St. James's lesson, "Blessed is he that endureth temptation." Let us therefore learn here, not to be irksome,‡ when God lays his cross upon us. Let us not despair, but call upon him; let us think we are ordained unto it. For truly we shall

* Or trials.

† Happy.

‡ Dissatisfied, angry.

never have done; we shall have one vexation or another, as long as we are in this world. But we have a great comfort; which is this, "God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above our strength." If we mistrust God, then we make him a liar: for God will not suffer us to be tempted further than we shall be able to bear; and again he will reward us; we shall have everlasting life. If we consider this, and ponder it in our hearts, wherefore should we be troubled? Let every man when he is in trouble call upon God with a faithful and penitent heart: "Lord, let me not be tempted further than thou shalt make me able to bear." And this is the office* of every Christian man; and look for no better cheer as long as thou art in this world, but trouble and vexations thou shalt have to satiety, thy belly full. And therefore our Saviour, being upon the mount Olivet, knowing what should come upon him, and how his disciples would forsake him, and mistrust him, taught them to fight against temptation; saying, "Watch and pray." As who should say, I tell you what you shall do, resort to God, seek comfort of him, call upon him in my name; and this shall be the way how to escape temptations without your peril and loss. Now let us follow that rule which our Saviour gives unto his disciples. Let us watch and pray, that is to say, let us be earnest and fervent in calling upon him, and in desiring his help; and no doubt he will order the matter so with us, that temptation shall not hurt us, but shall be rather a furtherance, and not an impediment to everlasting life. And this is our only remedy, to fetch help at his hands. Let us therefore watch, and pray, let not temptations bear rule in us, or govern us.

Now peradventure there are some amongst the ignorant unlearned sort, who will say unto me, "You speak much of temptations, I pray you tell us, how shall we know when we be tempted?" Answer, When you feel in yourselves, in your hearts, some concupiscence, or lust towards any thing that is against the law of God rise up in your hearts; that same is a tempting. For all manner of motions to wickedness are temptations. And we are tempted most commonly two manner of ways, "On the right hand, and on the left hand." Whensoever we are in honours, wealth, and prosperities, then we are tempted on the right hand: but when we are in open shame, outlaws, or in extreme

* Duty.

poverty and penuries, then that is on the left hand. There have been many who when they have been tempted on the left hand, that is, with adversities and all kinds of miseries, have been hardy, and most godly, have suffered such calamities, giving God thanks amidst all their troubles; and there have been many who have written most godly books in the time of their temptations and miseries. Some also there were, who stood heartily, and godlily suffered temptations, as long as they were in trouble: but afterward, when they came to rest, they could not stand so well as before in their trouble; yea the most part go and take out a new lesson of discretion, to flatter themselves and the world withal; and so they verify that saying, 'Honours change manners.' For they can find in their hearts to approve that thing now, which before they reproved. Aforetime they sought the honour of God, now they seek their own pleasure. Like as the rich man did, saying, "Soul, now eat, drink," &c. But it follows, "Thou fool." Therefore, let men beware of the right hand; for they are gone very soon, except God by his Spirit illuminate their hearts. I would that such men would begin to say with David, "Lord, prove me;" spur me forward, send me somewhat, that I forget not thee. So it appears that a Christian man's life is a strife, a warfare; but we shall overcome all our enemies, yet not by our own power, but through God, who is able to defend us.

Truth it is that God tempteth.* Almighty God tempteth for our benefit, to do us good withal; the devil tempteth to our everlasting destruction. God tempteth us for exercise sake, that we should not be slothful; therefore he proves us diversely. We had need often to say this prayer, "Lord, lead us not into temptation;" when we rise up in a morning, or whatsoever we do, when we feel the devil busy about us, we should call upon God.

The diligence of the devil should make us watchful, when we consider with what earnest mind he applies to his business; for he sleeps not, he slumbers not, he minds his own business, he is careful, and hath mind† to his matters. To what end is he so diligent, seeking and searching like a hunter? Truly, to take us at advantage. St. Peter calls him a roaring lion, whereby is expressed his power: for you know, the lion is the prince of all other beasts. "He goeth about." Here is his diligence: "There

* Or trieth. † Attends.

is no power to be likened unto his power:" yet our hope is in God; for, as strong as he is, our hope is in God, he cannot hurt or slay us without the permission of God; therefore let us resort unto God, and desire him that he would enable us to fight against him.

Further, his wiliness is expressed by this word "serpent;" he is of a swift nature, he has such compasses, such fetches, that he passeth all things in the world. Again, consider how long he has been a practitioner; you must consider what Satan is, what experience he has, so that we are not able to match with him. O how fervently ought we to cry unto God, considering what danger and peril we are in; and not only for ourselves ought we to pray, but also for all others; for we ought to love our neighbour as ourselves.

Seeing then that we have such an enemy, resist, for so it is needful. For I think that now in this hall amongst this audience, there are many thousand devils who go about to hinder us from hearing the word of God, to make hardness in our hearts, and to stir up such mischief within us. But what remedy? "Withstand," withstand his motions; and this must be done at the first. For, as strong as he is, when he is resisted at the first, he is the weakest; but if we suffer him to come into our hearts, then he cannot be driven out without great labour and travail. As for an example,—I see a fair woman, I like her very well, I wish in my heart to have her—Now, withstand; this is a temptation. Shall I follow my affections? No, no; call to remembrance what the devil is; call God to remembrance and his laws; consider what he has commanded thee: say unto God, "Lord, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." For I tell thee, when he is entered once, it will be hard to get him out again: therefore suffer him not too long, give him no mansion in thy heart, but strike him with the word of God, and he is gone; he will not abide. Another example:

There is a man that has done me wrong, taken away my living, or hurt my good name: the devil stirs me against him, to requite him, to do him another foul turn, to avenge myself upon him. Now when there rise up such motions in my heart, I must resist, I must strive, I must consider what God saith; "Let me have the vengeance: I will punish him for his ill doings."

In such wise we must fight with satan; we must kill

him with the word of God, "Withstand and resist:" Away thou, satan, thou movest me to that which God forbiddeth. God will defend me: I will not speak ill of my neighbour: I will do him no harm. So you must fight with him, and further remember what St. Paul saith, "If thy enemy be hungry, let him have meat:" this is the shrewd turn that Scripture allows us to do to our enemies; and so we shall "cast hot coals upon his head;" which is a metaphorical speech. That you may understand it, take an example: This man has done harm unto thee, make him warm with thy benefits, bear patiently the injuries done unto thee by him; and do for him in his necessities, then thou shalt heat him; for he is in coldness of charity; at length he shall remember himself and say,—What a man am I! this man has ever been friendly and good unto me, he has borne patiently all my wickedness, truly, I am much bound unto him: I will leave off from my wrong doings, I will no more trouble him.

And so you see that this is the way to make our enemy good, to bring him to reformation. But there are some who when they are hurt will do a foul turn again: but this is not as God would have it. St. Paul commands us to "pour hot coals upon our enemy's head;" that is to say, if he hurt thee, do him good, make him amends with well-doing; give him meat and drink, whereby is understood all things: when he has need of counsel, help him; or whatsoever it is that he has need of, let him have it. And this is the right way to reform our enemy, to amend him, and bring him to goodness; for so St. Paul commands us, saying, "Be not overcome of the wicked." For when I am about to do my enemy a foul turn, then he has gotten the victory over me, he has made me as wicked as himself. But we ought to overcome the ill with goodness, we should overcome our enemy with well-doing.

When I was in Cambridge, Master George Stafford read a lecture there, I heard him; and in expounding the Epistle to the Romans, coming to that place where St. Paul saith, that "we shall overcome our enemy with well-doing, and so heap up hot coals upon his head;" now in expounding that place, he brought in an example, saying, that he knew in London a great rich merchant, who had a very poor neighbour, yet for all his poverty he loved him very well, and lent him money at his need, and let him come to his

table whensoever he would. It was at the time when Doctor Colet* was in trouble, and would have been burnt, if God had not turned the king's heart to the contrary. Now the rich man began to be a Scripture man, he began to perceive the gospel; the poor man was a papist still. It chanced on a time, when the rich man talked of the gospel, sitting at his table, where he reproved popery and such kind of things; the poor man being then present, took a great displeasure against the rich man; insomuch that he would come no more to his house, he would borrow no more money of him, as he was wont to do beforetimes; yea, and he conceived such hatred and malice against him, that he went and accused him before the bishops. Now the rich man, not knowing any such displeasure, offered many times to talk with him, and to set him at quiet; but it would not be, the poor man had such a stomach, that he would not vouchsafe to speak with him: if he met the rich man in the street, he would go out of his way. One time it happened that he met him in so narrow a street that he could not avoid,† but must come near him; yet for all that, this poor man had such a stomach against the rich man, I say, that he was minded to go forward, and not to speak with him. The rich man perceiving that, caught him by the hand, and asked him, saying, "Neighbour, what is come into your heart, to take such displeasure with me? what have I done against you? tell me, and I will be ready at all times to make you amends."

Finally, he spake so gently, so charitably, so lovingly, and friendly, that it wrought in the poor man's heart, so that by and by he fell down upon his knees and asked him forgiveness. The rich man forgave him, and took him again to his favour, and they loved as well as ever they did before. Many a one would have said—Set him in the stocks, let him have bread of affliction, and water of tribulation—but this man did not so. And here you see an example of the practice of God's words, so that the poor man, bearing great hatred and malice against the rich man, was brought, through the lenity and meekness of the rich man,

* Dr. John Colet, dean of St. Paul's, and founder of St. Paul's school. He was persecuted by Dr. Fitzjames, bishop of London, but escaped by the favour of archbishop Warham, and died in peace, in 1519.

† Shun him.

from his error and wickedness, to the knowledge of God's word. I would that you would consider this example well, and follow it.*

"Lead us not into temptation." Certain it is that customable† sinners have but small temptations; for the devil letteth them alone, because they are his already, he has them in bondage, they are his slaves. But when there is any good man abroad that intends to leave sin and wickedness, and abhors the same, that man shall be tempted; the devil goes about to use all means to destroy that man, and to hinder him from going forward. Therefore all you who have such temptations, resort hither for aid and help, and withstand betimes; for I tell you, if you withstand and fight against him betimes, certainly you shall find him most weak; but if you suffer him to enter into your heart, and have a delight in his motions, then you are undone, then he has gotten the victory over you. And here it is to be noted, that the devil has no further power than God will allow him; the devil can go no further than God permits him to do; which should strengthen our faith, insomuch as we shall be sure to overcome him.

St. Paul, that excellent instrument of God, saith, "They that go about to get riches they shall fall into many temptations:" in which words St. Paul teaches us to beware. For when we set our minds upon this world, upon riches, then the devil will have a fling at us. Therefore let us not set our hearts upon the riches of this world, but rather let us labour for our living; and then let us use prayer; then we may be certain of our living. Though we have not riches, yet a man may live without great riches: "When we have meat, and drink, and clothing, let us be content, let us not gape for riches;" (1 Tim. vi.;) for I tell you it is a dangerous thing to have riches; and they that have riches, must make a great account for them: yea, and the most part of

* The rich man here spoken of was Humphry Munmouth, sheriff and alderman of London, who (after what is here related) in the days of cardinal Wolsey was imprisoned in the Tower for the gospel of Christ, and for maintaining those who favoured the same.—*Fox.* When Tindal was driven from the country, and took refuge in London, Munmouth sheltered him for half a year, and then enabled him to escape to the continent; for which, and for having Lutheran books in his possession, he was persecuted by the papists.

† Habitual.

rich men use their riches so naughtily, and so wickedly, that they shall not be able to make an account for them. And so you may perceive, how the devil uses the good creatures of God to our destruction; for riches are good creatures of God, but you see daily how men abuse them, how they set their hearts upon them, forgetting God and their own salvation. Therefore, as I said before, let not this affection take place in your hearts, to be rich: labour for your living, and pray to God, then he would send you things necessary; though he send not great riches, yet you must be content withal, for it is better to have sufficient living, than to have great riches. Therefore Agur, that wise man, desired of God that he would send him neither too much, nor too little; not too much, lest he should fall into proudness, and so despise God; not too little, lest he should fall to stealing, and so transgress the law of God. (Prov. xxx.)

"But deliver us from evil." This evil, the writers take to mean the devil; for the devil is the instrument of all ill; as God is the fountain of all goodness, so the devil is the original root of all wickedness. Therefore when we say, "Deliver us from evil," we mean deliver us from the devil and all his crafts, subtleties, and inventions, wherewith he intends to hurt us. And we of our ownselves know not what might hinder or stop us from everlasting life, therefore we desire him, that he will deliver us from all ill: that is to say, that he will send us nothing that might be a hinderance or impediment unto us, or keep us from everlasting felicity.

As for example: there are many who, when they are sick, desire of God to have their health, for they think if they might have their health they would do much good, they would live godly and uprightly. God sends them their health, but they soon forget all their promises made unto God, and fall into wickedness and horrible sins. So that it had been a thousand times better for them, to have been sick still, than to have their health. For when they were in sickness and affliction, they called upon God, they feared him; but now they care not for him, they despise and mock him. Now therefore lest any such thing should happen unto us, we desire him "to deliver us from evil;" that is to say, to send us such things as may be a furtherance unto us, to eternal felicity, and to take away those things which might lead us from the same.

There are some, who think it is a gay thing to avoid poverty, to be in wealth, and to live pleasantly: yet sometimes we see, that such an easy life gives us occasion to commit all wickedness, and so is an instrument of our damnation. Now therefore when we say this prayer, we require of God, that he will be our loving Father, and give us such things as may be a furtherance to our salvation, and take away those things which may hinder us from the same.

Now you have heard the Lord's Prayer, which is, as I told you, the abridgment of all other prayers, and it is the storehouse of God. For here we shall find all things necessary both for our souls and bodies. Therefore I desire you most heartily to resort hither to this storehouse of God: seek here what you lack; and no doubt you shall find things necessary for your wealth.* In the gospel of St. Matthew there are added these words, "For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, world without end. Amen." These words are added not without cause; for as we say in the beginning, "Our Father," signifying that he will fulfil our request, so at the end we conclude, saying, "Thine is the power," &c., signifying that he is able to help us in our distress, and to grant our requests. And though these are great things, yet we need not despair, but consider that he is Lord over heaven and earth, that he is able to do for us, and that he will do so, being our Father and our Lord, and king over all things.

Therefore let us often resort hither, and call upon him with this prayer, in our Christ's name; for he loveth Christ, and all those who are in Christ; for so he saith, "This is my well-beloved Son, in whom I have pleasure." Seeing then that God hath pleasure in him, he hath pleasure in the prayer that he hath made; and so when we say this prayer in his name, with a faithful penitent heart, it is not possible but he will hear us, and grant our requests. And truly, it is the greatest comfort in the world to talk with God, and to call upon him, in this prayer that Christ himself has taught us; for it takes away the bitterness of all afflictions. Through prayer we receive the Holy Ghost, who strengthens and comforts us at all times, in all trouble and peril.

"For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory."

* Well doing.

The kingdom of God is general throughout all the world, heaven and earth are under his dominion. As for the other kings, they are kings indeed, but toward God they are but deputies, but officers; he only is the right King; unto him only must and shall all creatures in heaven and earth obey, and kneel before His Majesty. Therefore have this ever in your hearts, what trouble and calamities soever shall fall upon you for God's word's sake; if you be put in prison, or lose your goods, ever say in your hearts, "Lord God, thou only art ruler and governor, thou only canst and wilt help and deliver us from all trouble, when it pleaseth thee; for thou art the King to whom all things obey." For, as I said before, all kings reign by him, and through him, as Scripture witnesses: "Through me kings rule." (Prov. viii.) To say this prayer with good faith and a penitent heart, is "a sacrifice of thanksgiving." We were wont to have "the sacrifice of the mass," which was the most horrible blasphemy that could be devised, for it was against the dignity of Christ, and his passion; but this sacrifice of thanksgiving every one may make who calls, with a faithful heart, upon God in the name of Christ.

Therefore let us at all times, without intermission, offer unto God the sacrifice of thanksgiving; that is to say, let us at all times call upon him, and glorify his name in all our livings; when we go to bed let us call upon him; when we rise, let us do likewise. Also, when we go to our meat and drink, let us not go unto it like swine and beasts, but let us remember God, and be thankful unto him for all his gifts. But above all things we must see that we have a penitent heart, or else it is to no purpose; for it is written, "God will not be praised of a wicked man." (Eccles. xv.) Therefore let us repent from the bottom of our hearts, let us forsake all wickedness, so that we may say this prayer to the honour of God, and our own advantage. And, as I told you before, we may say this prayer whole or by parts, according as we shall see occasion. For when we see God's name blasphemed, we may say, "Our Father, hallowed be thy name:" when we see the devil rule, we may say, "Our Father, thy kingdom come:" when we see the world inclined to wickedness, we may say, "Our Father, thy will be done." And when we lack necessary things, either for our bodies or souls, we may say, "Our Father, which art in heaven, give us this

day our daily bread." Also when I feel my sins and they trouble and grieve me, then I may say, "Our Father, which art in heaven, forgive us our trespasses."

Finally, when we desire to be preserved from all temptations, that they shall not have the victory over us, and that the devil shall not devour us, we may say, "Our Father, which art in heaven, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever, world without end." Amen.

THE

CHRISTIAN WALK.

A SERMON,

Preached on the twenty-third Sunday after Trinity, 1552.*

PHILIPPIANS iii.

Brethren, be followers together of me, and look on them which walk even so as ye have us for an ensample: for many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ.

THIS is the epistle which is read this day in the church, and it contains many good things. And this day two years, I entreated of the gospel of this day, at Stamford: and such matters as I had in hand, were gathered by a diligent person and put in print. The gospel was this, "Give unto Cæsar that which pertaineth unto Cæsar; and unto God that which pertaineth unto God." I will rehearse in few words what I said at that time.

The Pharisees and Scribes asked Christ our Saviour, whether they should give tribute unto Cæsar or not; for it irked† them that they should pay tribute, they thought it to be a great servitude. They asked Christ this question of a mischievous mind, intending to take him in his words; but he disappointed them, asking whose image‡ the money bare? They answered, The emperor's. Then our Saviour saith, "Give therefore unto the emperor that which pertaineth unto him, and unto God that which pertaineth unto God." They spake not of God, but only of the tribute, but our Saviour in his answer tells them and all the world

* This and the following sermons were also preached in Lincolnshire, and were "collected and gathered by Augustine Bernher."

† Gave them pain. ‡ Likeness.

their duties: yet he does it with dark and covered words. They confessed that the image was the emperor's, and so consequently subject unto him; then our Saviour commanded them to pay according unto the order, as the emperor had agreed with them, and that it was their duty to do so. Our Saviour referred them to their laws, signifying that they ought to obey the laws in their commonwealth; and so ought we to do too: for our Saviour in his answer teaches not only them, but us also; for as it was with the Jews, so is it with us here in England.

Our sovereign lord the king, when he lacketh any thing for the defence of his realm, it is presented in the parliament; there such things as are necessary for the king's affairs are required. Now whatsoever is granted unto his majesty by the parliament, the whole realm is bound in conscience to pay it, every man as it is required of him: and that is our due unto the king; namely, to give, and to do our duties in all things towards our sovereign lord the king; as far as it is not against God, we must obey him, and do his requests.

But now you will say, this is a great bondage, and a heavy yoke and servitude. Consider therefore who spoke these words, who commanded us to be obedient. Our Saviour himself. Now he saith, "My yoke is light:" how happens it then that he will lay upon me such a heavy burden? for it is a great burden for me to forego my goods; as when there is a subsidy,* so that the king requires one shilling of every pound. Now I am worth forty pounds, and so I pay forty shillings; to which money the king hath as good right, as to any inheritance which his majesty hath.

And this I speak to this end, for I fear this realm is full of thieves; for he is a thief that withdraws any thing from any man, whosoever he is. Now I put the case that it is allowed by the parliament, by common authority, that the king shall have one shilling of every pound, and there are certain men appointed in every shire who are valuers; if I either corrupt the valuer, or swear against my conscience, that I am not worth a hundred pounds when I am worth two hundred, I am a thief before God, and shall be hanged for it in hell. Now, how many thieves think you are there in England, who will not be valued above ten pounds when they are worth a hundred pounds? But this

* A tax upon property.

is a pitiful* thing, and God will punish them one day; for God's matters are not to be trifled with.

Now you will say, this is a heavy yoke, and intolerable to bear. Sirs, I will tell you what you shall do. Consider every one with himself what Christ hath done for us; from what great and intolerable burden he hath delivered us; when you consider that, the burden which the king lays upon us, will be light enough to us: for Christ has delivered us from the burden of our sins:—when we consider that, first, who he is that commands it; secondly, what he who biddeth us to obey has done for us, no doubt we shall be well content withal. But there are a great many of us who consider not that but rather deceive the king, or forswear themselves, or else rebel against the king; which things, no doubt, displease God most highly and grievously. Another thing there is, that should move us to bear this burden willingly, which is, his promise. For whosoever will be content to pay his duty truly and uprightly, as he ought to do, that man never shall have the less by fulfilling the commandment of God. For so saith God; "If thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord, thou shalt be blessed in the town, and blessed in the fields," &c. (Deut. xxviii.) So that if we do according as he willeth us to do—if we give unto the king that which pertaineth unto the king, no doubt we shall be blessed, we shall have never the less, for God's blessing will light upon us. But there are a great many amongst us, who do not believe these things to be true, they believe not the promises of God; and so they make God a liar: for "He that believeth not God, maketh God a liar." Now if this will not move us to do our duties, namely, that Christ has delivered us from the great burden of our sins, let us be moved at least with his promises; namely, that we shall increase our goods in doing our duties unto the king.

This little I thought good to say, and so to put you in remembrance of such things as I said at that time; for if this were well considered, we should be willing to do our duties, and to please God withal: for God loveth a cheerful obeyer, and one that with a good-will is ready to do such things as he appointeth.

Now let us turn to the epistle for this day; "Brethren, be followers together of me, and look on them that walk,

* Grievous.

even so as ye have us for an ensample." These are marvellous words of St. Paul, which seem outwardly to be arrogantly spoken: if any man should say so at this time, we should think him to be a very arrogant fellow. But you must see that you rightly understand Saint Paul, for he spake these words not of an arrogant mind: first, you must consider with whom he had to do, namely, with false apostles, who corrupted God's most holy word—the gospel which he had preached before. And so the same false prophets did much harm, for a great number of people credited them, and followed their doctrine: which things grieved St. Paul very sorely, therefore he admonished them, as if he had said, "You have preachers amongst you, I would not have you to follow them; follow rather me, and them that walk like as I do." This was not arrogantly spoken, but rather lovingly, to keep them from error. He saith the same to the Corinthians, in the eleventh chapter, saying, "Be ye the followers of me;" but there he addeth, "as I am the follower of Christ:" so put the same words hither, set them together, and then all is well. For I tell you it is a dangerous thing to follow men, and we are not bound to follow them, further than they follow Christ: we ought not to live after any saint, not after St. Paul, or Peter, nor after Mary the mother of Christ; to follow them, I say, universally, we are not bound so to do, for they did many things amiss. Therefore let us follow them as they follow Christ; for our Saviour Christ gives us a general rule and warning, saying, "Whatsoever they teach you, do it; but after their works do ye not;" and he addeth, "sitting in Moses' chair," that is to say, when they teach the truth: so that we ought to follow them that teach the truth, but when they do evil we should not follow them: therefore he saith in another place, "Except your righteousness be more than the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

This he speaks of the clergy, giving us warning not to do as they did; we must have such a righteousness as may stand before God: we are not appointed to follow saints; as when I hear this or that saint hath prayed so many psalms, so many hours in a day, I am not bound in conscience to follow him, to be his ape, and to do as he did, my vocation being contrary unto it.

There is a place in the second book of Maccabees where we read that Judas Maccabeus, that valiant captain, sent

certain money to Jerusalem to make a sacrifice for the dead. Now Judas did this; but it follows not that we are bound in conscience to do the like, as the papists say, who conclude from it: "Judas did this, and he was a godly man, therefore we should do it too, we should follow his ensample, and sacrifice for the dead."* I deny their argument. 'It is a naughty argument,' to conclude upon that which he did devoutly, having not God's word; that because he did it, therefore it was well done: for we are not bound to follow them in all their doings. For if Mary, the mother of Christ, should have done somewhat disagreeing from God's word, we should not follow her, who indeed had her faults, as St. Augustine plainly affirms in the third treatise upon John; where she moved Christ to do a miracle when their wine was lacking at the marriage; when our Saviour said, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" As if he had said, To do miracles is my Father's work, and he knoweth the time when it is best to be done; what have you to do with it? Where Chrysostom and Augustine plainly affirm that Mary was somewhat arrogant. So likewise it appeared in the evangelist Matthew, where she, interrupting his sermon, desired to speak with him; and a person told him when he was teaching the people, saying, "Thy mother is here, and would speak with thee; he answered and said, Who is my mother, or sister, or brother?" And he stretched out his hand, saying, "Whosoever doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven, he is my mother, sister, and brother." So likewise, when he was but twelve years of age, his mother and father seeking him, he said, "Know ye not that I must be in the business of my Father?" Now, in all these places, as the writers say, "She hath showed her frail nature:" shall we go now and follow her? No, no, we may not do so. St. Paul teaches us how we shall follow them, and in what things: "It is good always to be fervent, and to follow in good things:" (Gal. iv.) then it is not a good argument to say, such a man doeth it, therefore it is a good thing. No, not so; we must follow, and do all things, as may stand with our vocation, whereunto God hath called us: for when we leave our vocation whereunto God hath appointed

* The church of Rome quotes this passage of the Apocrypha as an argument in behalf of masses for the dead, but Latimer could detect the fallacy, and argues against it upon its own merits.

us, no doubt we do what is to be condemned: as for an example.

Our Saviour fasted forty days and forty nights without any manner of sustenance, shall we therefore do so too? No, because we are not able to do so too,—we should kill ourselves. Likewise Moses, that holy prophet of God, killed an Egyptian, who was a wicked and naughty man; shall I therefore go and kill yonder wicked man too? No, I may not do so,—for it is against my calling;—I am no magistrate, therefore I may not do it. As for Moses, he had a special inspiration of God. Phineas, that godly man, killed Zimri and Cozbi, who were occupied together in the act of wickedness; Phineas, that zealous man, came and killed them both at once, which his doing pleased God very well. Now you may make such an argument,—Phineas did so, and pleased God in his doings, may we therefore do so too? when we see any man dishonour God may we go and kill him by and by? This is not a good argument, for, as I said before, we must take heed to our calling, to our office. This Phineas had a special license to do so; we may not follow his example.

Abraham was a good and holy man, he was ready to kill his son, and burn him with fire; which pleased God wondrous well: afterward there were many who would follow the example of Abraham and burnt their children; but they did exceeding ill, and God was angry with them for so doing: therefore we must follow their example only so far forth as may stand with our vocation. . . . .

Therefore take this for a sure rule: we have not to follow the saints in *their* vocation, but we must follow God in *our* vocation; for like as they followed God in their vocation and calling, so we must follow God in our vocation: but when we will go about to follow God in their calling, and forsake our own calling, then no doubt we shall do wrong. This I have said that you might understand the words of St. Paul, where he saith, "Be followers of me;" therefore I showed you how far we ought to follow the example of the saints.

"For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." St. Paul speaks of the false prophets; he saith, "They walk:" by this word walk is signified our conversation and living, for when we would signify that

any man lives wickedly we may express it with these words; "he walketh wickedly." Now if there were many in St. Paul's time who walked wickedly, think you is the matter amended now at our time? I think, not at all. For we read in the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse, that satan shall be loose in the last days; that is to say, God will suffer him to exercise his crafts, his blasphemous wicked mind, which he beareth against God: and truly when a man considers the state of the whole world in every country, it appears that the devil is loose: for, what rebellions, what cruelties, what covetousness, what hatred and malice are among men! Insomuch that a man would think the whole world to be full of devils. Therefore when there were many in St. Paul's time, it must follow that there are more now: for now is the defection and swerving from the truth.

"Of which I have told you often, and now tell you weeping." St. Paul was a good man, a hearty and an earnest man in God's cause; he was a weeper. It was a grief to him to see the dishonour of God amongst them whom he had instructed in the word of God; he was sorry to see the people blinded and seduced with false doctrine. Such things grieve us not; though God be dishonoured, we care not for it:—when we have loss of our goods, and sustain damages, then we can weep from the bottom of our hearts, and be most sorrowful: but when we hear that God is dishonoured, that fornication is committed, or other horrible sins done; that grieves us not, then we weep not: and so it appears most manifestly that we have not the heart of St. Paul, we are not so minded.

Now peradventure somebody might say, that St. Paul had slandered these men in writing so sharply against them, and in calling them "the enemies of the cross of Christ;" but it is not so, he slanders them not. In the Epistle to Timothy he named some by their names, Philetus and Hymenæus. You must consider, that St. Paul did well in reproving them openly: a man may sometimes tell another man's faults, for not every telling is slandering. When a man tells another man's faults with a good mind, and to a good purpose, this telling is well: but it is naught, and very slandering, when I rehearse before other men the faults of my neighbour, with a malicious

stomach:—I hate him, and therefore I make him to be known:—I paint him in his colours, and sometimes I say more of him than I am able to prove; this is slandering; but when a man tells another man's faults with a good mind, for his reformation, that is not slandering. . . .

St. Paul here slanders them not, but sets them out in their colours, to admonish us to beware of them, and so we ought to do, when we know a man that is wicked and will not leave his wickedness after due admonitions. No doubt it is a good thing to give unto other men warning of such a man, that they may take heed of him; as for example; there are a company of thieves sworn together to be true one to the other, and not to disclose one another. Now suppose I am amongst them, and after some mischief done, I am taken and condemned by the law to be hanged. Shall I not disclose now my company, and give unto the magistrates warning of them? Yes, I would think that the man who is in such a case does well to disclose his companions, for it pertains to a good end, and is a charitable deed, else his company may do much harm before they are known. No doubt that man should do well, and I think he ought to do it. And I would to God that all thieves in England were so persuaded in their hearts, that when one were taken he should disclose his fellows; no doubt we should have better rest, thieves would not so much trouble the commonwealth as they do.

"Weeping;" it grieved St. Paul very sore, that Christian souls should so be seduced through false religion. I would wish that there were such a fervent zeal now in us as was in him then; but it is not so, we have no care for the souls of Christian people. And that appears manifestly by those unpreaching prelates, for if they had such an earnest mind to the flock of Christ as St. Paul had, no doubt they would not be so lordly, so slothful in doing their duties; but they lack such an earnest mind as St. Paul had, such an earnest zeal they lack.

"They are the enemies of the cross of Christ." A man may be an enemy of the cross of Christ two ways. All the papists in England, and especially the spiritual men,* are the enemies of the cross of Christ two ways.

First, when he is a downright papist, given to monkery,† I warrant you he is in this opinion, that with his own

* Ecclesiastics. Many of the clergy then were secretly papists.
† Monastic life.

works he merits remission of his sins; and satisfies the law through and by his own works; and so thinks himself to be saved everlastingly. This is the opinon of all papists. And this doctrine was taught in times past in schools and in the pulpits. Now all those that hold such an opinion are the enemies of the cross of Christ, of his passion and bloodshedding: for they think in themselves that Christ needed not to die, and so they despise his bitter passion; they do not consider our birth-sin, and the corruption of our nature; nor yet do they know the quantity of our actual sins, how many times we fall in sins, or how much our own power is diminished, nor what power the devil hath: they consider not such things; but think themselves able with their own works to enter into the kingdom of God. And therefore I tell you, this is the most perilous doctrine that can be devised. For all faithful and true Christians believe only in his death; they long to be saved through his passion and bloodshedding, this is all their comfort: they know, and most steadfastly believe that Christ fulfilled the law, and that his fulfilling is theirs; so that they attribute unto Christ the getting and meriting of everlasting life. And so it follows that they which attribute the remission of sins, the getting of everlasting life, unto themselves, or their works, they deny Christ, they blaspheme and despise him. For what other cause did Christ come, but to take away our sins by his passion, and so deliver us from the power of the devil? But these merit-mongers have so many good works that they are able to sell them for money; and so bring other men to heaven by their good works; which, no doubt, is the greatest contempt of the passion of Christ that can be devised.* For Christ only, and no man else, merited remission, justification, and eternal felicity for as many as will believe the same; they that will not believe it, shall not have it: for it is only by believing that we have. For Christ shed as much blood for Judas as he did for Peter:† Peter believed it, and therefore he was saved; Judas would not believe, and therefore he was condemned; the fault being in him only—in nobody else. But to say or to believe

* The church of Rome considers that the saints have wrought more good works than are necessary for their own salvation, and that these superabundant merits form a fund which the pope, as head of the church, can apply or sell for the salvation of others.

† On this point Latimer differed materially from most of the British Reformers.

that we should be saved by the law is a great dishonouring of Christ's passion: for the law serves to another purpose, it brings us to the knowledge of our sins, and so to Christ: for when we are come through the law to the knowledge of our sins,—when we perceive our filthiness,—then we are ready to come to Christ, and fetch remission of our sins at his hands.

But the papists fetch the remission of their sins, not in the passion of Christ, but in their own doings; they think to come to heaven by their own works; which is naught. We must do good works, we must endeavour ourselves to live according to the commandments of God; yet, for all that, we must not trust in our doings. For though we do the uttermost, yet it is all imperfect, when you examine it by the rigour of the law, which law serves to bring us to the knowledge of our sins, and so to Christ; and by Christ we shall come to the quietness of our conscience. But to trust in our good works, is but robbing Christ of his glory and majesty. Therefore it is not more necessary to do good works, than it is to beware how to esteem them. Therefore take heed, good Christian people, deny not Christ, put not your hope in your own doings, for if you do you shall repent of it.

Another denying of Christ is this mass-mongering; for all that are mass-mongers are deniers of Christ; who believe or trust in the sacrifice of the mass, and seek remission of their sins therein: for this opinion has done very much harm, and has brought innumerable souls to the pit of hell; for they believed the mass to be a sacrifice for the dead and living; and this opinion has gotten all these abbies and chantries, almost the half part of all England; and they would have gotten more if they had not been restrained by certain laws. For what would folks not do to ease themselves from the burden of their sins? But it was a false easement, a deceitful thing: therefore how much are we bound unto God who hath delivered us from this bondage, from this heavy yoke of popery, which would have thrust us to everlasting damnation. For now we know the very* way how we shall be delivered, we know that Christ is offered once for us, and that this one offering remedies all the sins of the whole world; for he was "the Lamb which was killed from the beginning of the world:" (Rev. xiii.) that is to say, all that believed in

* True.

him since Adam was created were saved by him. They that believed in Abraham's seed, it was as good unto them, and stood them in as good effect, as it does unto us now at this day. So that his oblation is of such efficacy that it purifies and takes away all the sins of the whole world. They now that will be content to leave their sinful life, wrestle with sin, and believe in our Saviour Christ, they shall be partakers of everlasting felicity.

Here you may perceive that Christ has many enemies in the whole world; he has many that slander him, that diminish his glory; namely, all the papists that trust in their own merits, or seek remission of their sins by the sacrifice of the mass: all these now are enemies to the cross of Christ. In short, all those that seek remission of their sins other ways than in the passion of Christ, they are traitors to God, and shall be damned world without end, unless they repent.

But here I must say some things unto you, and I speak it to satisfy some of you: for I think there are many who will reason that they think it to be no matter though the curate is erroneous and naught in his doctrine; they care not for that; for they will say, "I will hear him, and do according as he commands me to do: when he teaches false doctrine, and leads me the wrong way, he shall make answer for me before God: his false doctrine shall do me no harm, though I follow the same."

This is a naughty reason, and contrary to Christ our Saviour's doctrine; for so he saith, "If the blind lead the blind, they shall fall both into the pit." Mark here, he saith not the leader shall fall into the pit, but they both shall fall, the leader and he that is led, the blind curate and his blind parishioners: and so it was in St. Paul's time, not only the leaders, the false teachers, went to the devil, but also they that followed their false doctrine. And therefore St. Paul is so earnest in admonishing them to beware and take heed to themselves; yea, with weeping eyes he desires them to refuse the false prophets.

So likewise God himself gives us warning in the third chapter of the prophet Ezekiel; saying, "If I say unto thee concerning the ungodly man, that without doubt he must die, and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest unto him, that he may turn from his evil way, and so live;

then shall the same ungodly man die in his unrighteousness: but his blood will I require of thy hands." Again, in the thirty-third chapter he saith; "When I send a sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their country, and set him to be their watchman; the same man, when he seeth the sword come upon the land, shall blow the trumpet, and warn the people. If a man now hear the noise of the trumpet, and will not be warned, and the sword come and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head: for he heard the sound of the trumpet, and would not take heed: therefore his blood be upon him: but if he will receive warning, he shall save his life." Again, "If the watchman seeth the sword come, and show it not with the trumpet, so that the people are not warned: if the sword come then, and take any man from amongst them, the same shall be taken away in his own sin: but his blood will I require of the watchman's hands."

In these places of Scripture it appears most manifestly that not only the wicked curate shall go to the devil, but also all those that follow his evil doctrine. The wicked shall die in his wickedness: for though God require the blood of the parishioners at the curate's hands, yet for all that they shall be damned.

But I pray you be not offended with me, when I tell you one thing many times; for I do it that you may perceive what danger it is to have an ill curate: this makes me put you many times in remembrance of it.

I will tell you now a pretty story of a friar to refresh you withal. A limitour* of the gray friars, in the time of his limitation, preached many times, and had but one sermon at all times; which sermon was of the ten commandments. And because the friar had preached this sermon so often, one that heard it before, told the friar's servant that his master was called "Friar John—ten—commandments." Wherefore the servant showed the friar his master thereof, and advised him to preach of some other matters; for it grieved the servant to hear his master derided. Now the friar made answer, saying, "Belike then thou canst say the ten commandments well, seeing thou hast heard them so many times." "Yes," said the servant,

* A friar who was appointed to beg for his order within a certain district.

"I warrant you." "Let me hear them," said the master: then the servant began, "Pride, covetousness, lechery," and so numbered the deadly sins for the ten commandments.

And so there are many at this time who are weary of the old gospel, they would fain hear some new things; they think themselves so perfect in the old, when they are no more skilful than this servant was in his ten commandments.

Therefore I say, be not offended with me, when I tell you one thing two or three times. And especially mark this well, that the parishioners are not excused before God by the wickedness and blindness of the priest. For God saith not, "I will require the blood of the people at the curate's hand, and the people shall be without blame." No, not so. "But the wicked shall perish because of his wickedness;" so that the blind people and the blind curate shall go to hell together. I would wish that all England were persuaded so, for the most part of the people think themselves to be excused by their curates. But it is not so, for if there is any man wicked because his curate teaches him not, his blood shall be required at the curate's hands: yet for all that the parishioner shall go to the devil withal—that shall be his end.

Therefore beware of that opinion; think not to be excused by your curate; for when you do, you do not well, and so you shall repent in the end. St. Paul therefore is diligent to give us warning of the false prophets, lest we should be deceived by them. In another place St. Paul compares their doctrine unto a sickness, which is called a cancer; which sickness, when it once begins, except it be withstood, will run over the whole body, and at length kill: so it is with this false doctrine.

Now I must answer to an objection, or doubt, that peradventure some of you may have; you will think when you hear what is the nature of false doctrine, you will think, I say, "Alas! what is done with our grandfathers? no doubt they are lost everlastingly, if this doctrine be true; for, according to your saying, they have had the false doctrine, therefore they are damned; for the nature of false doctrine is to condemn." Such doubts some will make, yea, and there are some who in no wise will receive the gospel, and that only for this opinion's sake; for they

think that when they should receive the gospel it were to think that their forefathers be damned.

Now to this objection, or doubtfulness, I will make answer. It is with the false doctrine like as it is with fire; the nature of fire is to burn and consume all that which is laid in the fire that may be burned. So the nature of false doctrine is to condemn, to bring to everlasting damnation; that is the nature of the false doctrine. But yet for all that, though the nature of the fire is to burn and consume all things, yet there have been many things in the fire which have not been burned nor consumed; as the bush which appeared unto Moses, burned in the fire, and yet was not consumed. What was the cause? Truly, God's power.

We read also in the third chapter of Daniel, that Nebuchadnezzar, the king, caused a golden image to be made, and called all his lords and his people to come and worship his idol, which he had set up; threatening further, "that whosoever would not fall down and worship the said idol, should be cast into a hot oven."

Now there were three young men, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who refused to worship the said idol; saying, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we ought not to consent unto thee in this matter, for why? Our God whom we serve is able to keep us from the hot burning oven, and can right well deliver us out of thy hands; and though he will not, yet shalt thou know that we will not serve thy gods, nor do any reverence to that image which thou hast set up. Then was Nebuchadnezzar exceedingly full of indignation against them, and commanded that the oven should be made seven times hotter than it was wont to be, and spake unto the strongest men that were in his host, to bind Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, and cast them into the burning oven. So these men were bound in their coats, hose, shoes, with their other garments, and cast into a hot burning oven: for the king's commandment was so strait, and the oven was exceeding hot, that these three men Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego fell down in the hot burning oven, being fast bound. Then Nebuchadnezzar the king marvelled, and stood up in all haste, and spake unto his council, saying, 'Did you not cast these three men into the fire?' They answered, saying, 'Yea, O king.' He answered and said 'Lo for all that, I see

four men going loose in the midst of the fire, and nothing corrupt;* and the fourth is like the Son of God to look upon.'

Here in this story you see, that though the nature of the fire is to consume, yet these three men were not consumed by the same; for not a hair of their heads perished, but rather the fire brake out and consumed those who put them in the oven. For though the fire of its nature would have consumed them, yet, through the power of God, the strength of the fire was vanquished, and the men were preserved from it. Even so is it with popery, with false doctrine, the nature of it is to consume, to corrupt and bring to everlasting sorrow; yet let us hope that our forefathers were not damned, for God hath many ways to preserve them from perishing; yea, in the last hour of death God can work with his Holy Ghost, and teach them to know Christ his Son for their Saviour. And though they were taught other ways before, yet God can preserve them from the poison of the false doctrine. I will show you a notable story done in king Ahab's time, written in the first book of the Kings, the nineteenth chapter.

At the time when Ahab, that wicked king, and his wife Jezebel, more wicked than her husband, had the rule, they abolished the word of God entirely, and set up false doctrine, and killed the true prophets of God; insomuch that Elias said unto God, with crying and great lamentations, "Lord, the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, broken down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword: and I only am left, and they seek my life to take it away." Here it appears that the pulpits at that time were occupied with false teachers, and false religion, like as it was in the time of our forefathers: insomuch that Elias cried out and said plainly, that there were left no more than he only. But what saith God? "I have left me seven thousand which have not bowed their knees unto Baal." When Elias thought that there were no more left but he only, then God showed him that a great many were left, and not infected with the poison of the false doctrine. Therefore like as God could preserve a great number of the Israelites at the same time, so he could preserve our forefathers from the poison of popery,

* And they have no hurt.

which was taught at that time; "for the Lord knoweth which are his." So Christ himself saith, "No man shall take those from me which my Father hath given to me," (John x.) that is to say, which are ordained to everlasting life.

"The Lord will not cast away his people, and his inheritance he will not forsake." (Psal. xciv.) Therefore let us hope that though the doctrine at that time was false and poisoned, yet for all that, God has had his; he has had seven thousand, that is to say, a great number amongst them that took no harm by the false doctrines. For he wonderfully preserved them, like as he did in the great dearth, when all things were so dear, when the rich franklins* would not sell their corn in the markets, then, at that time, the poor were wonderfully preserved of God: for according to man's reason they could not live, yet God preserved them, insomuch that their children were as fat and as well liking, as if they had been gentlemen's children. So, like as God could preserve the poor with their children in that great dearth, so he could preserve our forefathers from everlasting perdition; though they lacked the food of their souls, yet he could feed them inwardly with the Holy Ghost.

But now you will say, seeing then that God can save men, and bring them to everlasting life, without the outward hearing of the word of God, then we have no need to hear the word of God, we need not to have preachers amongst us. For like as he hath preserved them, so he will preserve us too, without the hearing of God's word.

This is a foolish reason; I will answer you this. I will make you this argument—God can and is able to preserve things from fire, so that they shall not burn or consume; and therefore I will go and set my house afire, and it shall be preserved! Or this, God preserved these three men from fire, so they took no harm; therefore I will go and cast myself into the fire, and I shall take no harm. Is this now a good reason? No, no; for these three men had their vocation to go into the fire, they were cast in by violence: so if God will have thee go into the fire by violence for his word's sake, then go with a good will, and no doubt either he will preserve thee as he did them, or else he will take thee out of this miserable life, to ever-

* Freeholders, farmers.

lasting felicity; but to cast myself into the fire without any calling, I may not; for it is written, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

So likewise in our time, God hath sent light into the world; he hath opened the gates of heaven unto us by his word; which word is opened unto us by his officers, by his preachers: shall we now despise the preachers? shall we refuse to hear God's word, to learn the way to heaven? and require him to save us without his word? No, no; for when we do so, we tempt God, and shall be damned world without end.

This much I thought good to say against the suggestion of the devil, when he says, "Thy forefathers are damned:" that thou mightest learn not to despair of their salvation, and yet not be too careful;* for they have their part, we must not make any account for their doings; every one must make answer for himself, for if they are damned they cannot be brought again with our sorrowfulness; let us rather endeavour ourselves to hear God's word diligently, and learn the way of salvation, so that when we shall be called, we may be sure of it.

Now these false preachers, of whom St. Paul speaketh here, are enemies unto the cross of Christ. What shall be their end? Truly, perdition, destruction, and everlasting damnation. "Whose god is their belly:" the false preachers preach only pleasant things, and so get great rewards; and are able to live wealthily in this world, and to make good cheer. I fear me there are many of these belly-gods in the world, who preach pleasant things to get riches, to go gay, and trick up themselves: they care for no more, they study and do what they can to buckle the gospel and the world together; to set God and the devil at one table; they are gospellers no longer than till they get riches: when they have what they seek for, they care for no more; then the gospel is gone quite out of their hearts, and their glory is to their shame; it is a short glory and a long shame that they shall have; for in the other world, "all the world shall laugh upon them to their shame, which are worldly-minded." Are there not more that are worldly-minded than that are godly-minded? I think St. Paul spake these words of the clergymen, who will take upon them the spiritual office of preaching, and yet meddle in

* Anxious.

worldly matters too, contrary to their calling. The clergy of our time have procured unto themselves a liberty to purchase lands. Think ye not that such doings savoured somewhat of worldly things? But I will desire them to take heed: for St. Paul saith here, that all they that are worldly-minded, are enemies of the cross of Christ; for they make their bellies to be their gods. Therefore they shall receive their punishment for their wicked doings. What shall that be? Truly, everlasting pain of hell fire, world without end, without any deliverance from the same; this is their reward.

But what shall become of St. Paul and all true preachers? He saith, "But our conversation is in heaven." What? Was St. Paul in heaven when he spake these words? No; he was here on earth. But when we walk the pilgrimage of which I told you,—God's pilgrimage, then our conversation is in heaven; that is, conformable unto God's heavenly will: and God sees us and will reward us; when we do the works of our vocation, and wrestle with sin and wickedness, and live after God's will and pleasure: whosoever doth so, that man or woman hath his conversation in heaven: "From whence we long for the Saviour, even the Lord Jesus Christ."

St. Paul looked for him to come from heaven. What? is he not here already? Christ is here with us already to our comfort, by his Spirit and power, to be our helper, and to work with his sacraments, to defend us from danger and peril; so he is with us in earth, but he is not here bodily: for he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Almighty; from thence shall he come to judge the quick and the dead. All good men and women long for him: and no doubt he will come, and very shortly, and will take account of every one of us; therefore as all the writers admonish us, let us never forget the day which we call the doom's-day. St. Jerome saith, that he ever thought he heard the trumpet. Now they that have in consideration this day, and make themselves ready, it is a joyful thing unto them; but they that are customable* sinners, and will not leave their wickedness, such as are common swearers, adulterers, or idolaters, and such as credit popery; unto them, this day shall be a fearful day, it shall be a heavy coming unto them. St. Paul tells what cheer they

* Habitual.

shall have; namely, everlasting damnation; being the enemies of Christ, their glory shall turn to their eternal shame. So you see that all the world may be divided into two parts; namely, into the faithful and unfaithful.

Now St. Paul said, that he looked for this Saviour "which shall change our vile bodies according to the working, whereby he is able also to subdue all things unto himself." We have a frail body, mortal, subject to all infirmities and miseries: it is a gross body, but for all that it shall rise again, and shall be changed. It is mortal now, it shall be immortal then; it is passible* now, it shall be impassible then; it is gross now, it shall be turned into agility then; it is corruptible now, it shall be incorruptible then; it is ignominious now, it shall be glorious then, like unto his body. Now when it shall be so with our bodies, you may be sure it shall be so with our souls too; for the felicity that we shall have, which God hath laid up for us, passes all men's thoughts: what joy they shall have that are content to leave their sins, and live godly. And these things Christ our Saviour shall bring to pass by his infinite power.

Now to make an end; for God's sake mark these lessons well: for this is a very good piece of Scripture, wherein Paul shows both ways. I think it were better for us to live so that we may attain to this felicity, which is prepared for us in heaven, rather than to follow our carnal desires and lusts. For when we leave our wicked life, and credit the word of God, and delight in it, no doubt it shall bring us in the end to this salvation, of which St. Paul speaks here.

But how shall it go with the others who will not hear God's word, nor leave their wickedness? Truly, "their worm shall not die." (Mark ix.) By these words of Christ, is expressed the great pain and sorrow that the wicked shall have: therefore, saith the Scripture, "The death of sinners is the worst thing that can happen unto them." (Psal. xxxiv.) What means he by that? He signifies unto us, that the wicked are not enough punished here; it shall be worse with them after their death. So that it shall be a change: they that have pleasure here, and live according to their desires, shall come to afflictions in the other world,

* Exposed to suffering.

Again, they that have afflictions here, shall come yonder to the perpetual Sabbath, where there is no manner of miseries, but a perpetual lauding and praising of God; to whom, with the Son and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, now and ever, world without end. Amen.

CHRIST THE BEST PHYSICIAN.

A SERMON

Preached on the twenty-fourth Sunday after Trinity, 1552.

MATTHEW ix., LUKE viii., MARK v.

While he spake unto them this, behold there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter lieth at the point of death, but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus arose and followed him, and so did his disciples; and behold a woman which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, &c.

THIS is a remarkable story, and much comfort we shall find in it, if we consider and weigh it, with all the circumstances. The evangelist Mark saith, the ruler's name was Jairus; he was an officer; some think that he was a reader of Scripture, as there were at that time; or perhaps he was such an officer as we call a churchwarden; which is a great office in the great cities. Churchwardens can bring much matter to pass; such a great officer he was. For though the Jews had a law, that they should make no sacrifices except at Jerusalem, where the temple was, and all the ceremonies; yet they had in every town their churches or synagogues, as we have churches here in England; commonly every town has a church. And this word Church sometimes signifies the congregation, the people that are gathered together: and sometimes it signifies the place where the people come together; *Continens pro contento*, that is to say, "The thing that containeth, for that which is contained."

Now our Saviour coming to Capernaum, where that

great man dwelt, which was such a town as Bristol or Coventry is, Jairus comes to him in haste, and falleth down before him, "and maketh great suit unto him, that he would come to his house and heal his daughter, who was sick." No doubt he had heard what manner of man our Saviour was, and wherefore he was come into this world, namely, to save sinners both in souls and bodies; and he had heard also of the general proclamation, written in the eleventh chapter of Matthew, where our Saviour saith, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will ease you."

This proclamation Jairus had heard, and believed it, and therefore he came to Christ: He did not as a great many of us do, who when we are in trouble, or sickness, or lose any thing, run hither and thither to wizards or sorcerers, who are called "wise men;" when there is no man so foolish and blind as they are. . . And yet some run after them, seeking aid and comfort at their hands. But this good man did not so, he knew that God had forbidden to run to wizards. But what doth he? He comes to Christ our Saviour, with a good, strong, and unfeigned faith. For, as I told you before, he had heard of Christ, of his proclamation, which moved him now in his distress to come unto him. And no doubt he had a good substantial faith, as appeared by his behaviour; yet he had not so good a faith as the centurion had, who sent a message unto him, saying, "Lord, say but one word, and my servant shall be whole." This was a wondrous great faith: insomuch that Christ said, "I have not found such a faith in all Israel." But though this Jairus had not so good a faith as the centurion had, yet he had such faith as led him to Christ. He comes to Christ, he believes that Christ is able to help him, and according unto his belief it happens unto him; for his daughter was healed, as you shall hear afterward; and so upon him is fulfilled the Scripture, "I have believed and therefore I have spoken." For look, what man soever has a good faith, he will not hold his peace, he will speak, he will call for help at his hands. For if this Jairus had not had a good faith, he would not have humbled himself so much, to fall down before such a poor man as our Saviour was.

Some would have had respect to their honour; they would have thought it scorn to fall down before such a poor man as our Saviour was, or would have been afraid

of the people that were present, to honour him so highly, and to confess him to be a helper. And no doubt that Jairus was in great danger of his life; for Christ was not beloved among the Jews; therefore it was a great matter for this Jairus to honour Christ so openly before all the multitude. And no doubt if he had not had such good, strong, and earnest faith, he would not have done as he did; but he had a good strong faith; therefore he was not afraid of any thing in the world.

Now you should learn of this Jairus, first by his example to go to Christ, in all distresses to seek help by him: and also you shall mark and observe his great and fatherly love towards his daughter; for he makes great suit to Christ for her, which shows that he had a great and earnest love towards her. This fatherly affection and love of the parents towards their children is the good gift of God; God has planted the same in their hearts; and this especially for two respects. First, for the children's sake: for it is an irksome thing to bring up children; and not only that, but also it is a chargeable thing to keep them, and to wait upon them, and preserve them from all peril. If God had not planted such love in the parents' hearts, indeed it were impossible to do so much for them; but God has planted such love in their hearts, which love takes away the irksomeness of all labour and pain. For what is a child when it is left alone? what can it do? how is it able to live?

Another cause wherefore God has planted such love in the parents' hearts towards their children is, that we may learn by it what affection he bears towards us. For though the love of parents towards their children is very great, yet the love of God towards us is greater; yea, his love towards us far surpasses all fatherly love which they have towards their children. And though Christ alone is the Son of God, yet with his death and passion he has merited that we should be the chosen children of God. For God for our sake has bestowed his only Son unto death, to the end that we should be made through him his chosen children. Now therefore all that believe in Christ, and trust through his passion to be saved, all they are the children of God, and God loves them more than any natural father loves his child. For the love of God towards us is more earnest, and more vehement towards us, than the fatherly love towards his natural child: which should comfort us in

all our distress—in what peril or danger soever we are, we should believe that God is our Father. And therefore we should come unto him in the name of Christ his Son our Saviour: therefore we need not despair in any manner of thing; but rather whatsoever we have in hand, let us run to him, who bears such a fatherly affection towards us, more a great deal than our natural fathers and mothers can do. As for our carnal or temporal fathers and mothers, sometimes they are unnatural, so that they will not help their children in their distress; sometimes, again, they would fain help, but they are not able to help them; but our heavenly Father is loving and kind towards us, so that he will help. And then again he is mighty, he is almighty; he can and may help: so that there lacketh neither good will in him nor power. Therefore let us not despair, but rather come unto him in all tribulation, and no doubt we shall be eased by him. For certain it is, that the Almighty God has greater affection towards us than our natural fathers and mothers can have. And this appears by his giving his own Son, the highest treasure that even he had in heaven or in earth, for us, even unto death, in his bitter sufferings.

Further, in the prophets every where, he sets out his great love which he hath towards us, saying, "Can a woman forget her own child which she hath borne into this world? Yea, and though she do forget the same, yet will not I forget thee." (Is. xlix.) It is a rare thing when the devil so much prevails in parents, that a mother should neglect or forget her own child; yet, saith God, Though it were so that she would forget her child, yet will not I forget thee, when thou believest in my Son Christ: for the devil cannot prevail against me, though he prevail against women, so that sometimes they forget their own children, or kill them; yet shall he not prevail against me, for I am mightier than he is.

Further, his love which he bears towards us is expressed in the seventh chapter of Matthew, where Christ saith; "Is there any man among you who if his son ask bread, will he offer him a stone? or if he asketh fish, will he offer him a serpent? If ye then being evil, can give your children good gifts, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven, give good things if ye ask them of him?" As if he should say, Though you are evil, yet when your children would have any thing that might hurt them, you

being fathers and mothers give them good things, which shall not hurt them. Now, saith he, Seeing that ye, whose nature is ill, corrupt, and poisoned with wickedness, (for there is no saint in heaven, neither St. Peter, nor Paul, but, when they were here, their nature was corrupt and given to wickedness, and so they might be called ill,)—seeing that ye can give good gifts unto your children, how much more will God, who is the fountain of all goodness, give you good things when ye desire them of him? Here you may learn now, that the love of God towards mankind passeth all natural love: and that he is ready to give unto every one that cometh to him for help; yea, he will give us the very Holy Ghost when we desire it.

Now to the matter: this Jairus is a good and loving father towards his child, he comes and desires help of Christ, that his daughter may be healed. A covetous man would have passed on, he would not have taken so much pains as to come to Christ and desire his help. Therefore by this Jairus we may learn to have a good faith towards God, and a right natural love towards our children. But it is a comfortable thing to consider this fatherly affection of God towards us: if we would well consider the same, it would stir up a child-like love in our hearts towards him, so that we should be content to be ordered by him, and ruled according to his pleasure; as a good and godly child is content to be ruled by his father and mother, and will in nowise do any thing against them, so we should be obedient unto God as the child is unto his parents.

But you will say, "I pray you tell us what is the will of God?" Answer, The general will of God is expressed in the ten commandments: there we shall find what we should do, and what we should leave undone. But there is a special will of God, which is every man's calling; for it is the will and pleasure of God that every one should do according unto his calling, whereunto God has appointed him: as the magistrates, their calling is to see that all things are well, that justice is executed, that the wicked are punished, and the good are rewarded. Also, that good and godly laws be maintained and executed; and most specially, that the word of God is taught, that the people be not ignorant in that: and this is the will of God. When the magistrates do so, and when they endeavour themselves that God's honour and glory be set abroad, and that wick-

edness be abolished, then they do according unto their calling. So likewise the calling of the subjects is to be obedient unto the magistrates; not to rebel against them; for when they do so, they strive against God himself, and shall be punished of him. Also, the married man ought to do his duty towards his wife, it is the will of God, to love his wife, and to provide for her. Likewise the woman ought to do her duty towards her husband, in obeying him in all things that are not against God: for she may not obey her husband in wicked things, which are against God, but else there is no exception, obey she must: for so it is written, so saith God unto her, "In sorrow shalt thou bring forth thy children, and thy desire shall pertain unto thy husband, and he shall have the rule of thee." (Gen. iii.) Now when the woman does so, then she does according unto her calling.

Further, masters ought to do their duties towards their servants and household, to instruct them in God's word, and to let them have their meat and drink. Likewise, servants ought to obey their masters with all humbleness, to serve them uprightly and diligently, according as God wills them to do. Now this is the special will of God, namely, that every one should do according unto his calling, as God willeth him to do. Now to fulfil this will of God, we should be moved by the great love and fatherly affection which God beareth towards us: this love should move us to obey him, as the good child obeys his father and mother.

Now comes another matter; for as our Saviour was going to the house where this young maid lay sick, there came a good faithful woman creeping through the people, for our Saviour was tossed and turmoiled in the multitude. For you must understand that this Jairus was a great rich man, a man of great estimation, therefore the people hearing that his daughter was sick, or dead, came unto him to go with the corpse.

Here I must take occasion to speak somewhat: there are many now-a-days very hasty to bury their friends, yea, sometimes before they are well dead. I heard say once, that a young woman was sick, and fell in a swoon; her friends which were with her, directly made her ready to be buried; and when they went with the corpse, and were coming into the churchyard, the corpse stirred, and the

vicar commanded them that bare her to set her down, and so finally the woman recovered. I tell this tale to give you warning, not to be too hasty with sick folks.

I have read in St. Augustine, that there was once a man who lay seven days speechless, neither seeing, nor hearing, nor yet receiving any sustenance, except some liquor, which they poured into his throat with a quill. Now that same man, after seven days, spake again; and the first word that he spake was this, What is the time? He thought he had lain but a little while. Now, if his friends had been so hasty with him, he would have been buried before that time. Therefore I admonish you, not to be too hasty with dead corpses, as long as they are warm keep them in the bed; for when a man is dead indeed, he will soon be cold.

When our Saviour was going among this great multitude to Jairus's house, there cometh a woman through the people, desirous to touch his garment. The evangelist Mark sets out this story more plainly than Matthew does; he saith, "There was a certain woman which had been diseased of an issue twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and felt no amendment at all, but rather was worse and worse. When she had heard of Jesus, she came in the press of the people behind him, and touched his garment: for she said, If I only may touch the hem of his clothes I shall be whole." This woman had been sick twelve years. "She had suffered much sorrow by it;" for no doubt whoever hath to do with physicians must be a sufferer: it is an irksome thing to go to physic; a man must receive many bitter medicines and potions. Therefore Mark saith, "She suffered much: they had put her to great pain, and she had bestowed all her substance upon them, and was never the better, but rather the worse." Belike she had been a woman of great riches, of great substance, else she would not have been able to pay physicians so long. This place of Scripture reproves not physicians, as though physic were a superfluous thing, and not necessary, because this woman was not healed; as if you should reason in this manner: What, shall I go to physic? no, that I will not, for I read in Scripture, that a woman spent all her goods upon physicians, and yet was never the better. But this text makes no more against physic, than that text does against labour, where Peter saith, "We have laboured the

whole night, and have gotten nothing." Now a rash fellow might say, What, hath St. Peter laboured all night and caught nothing? then I will not labour at all, for I shall get nothing by my labour. But this is a foolish reasoning. For though the woman spent all upon physicians, and yet was not healed; and though Peter laboured all night, and caught nothing, yet for all that we are allowed to use physic, and commanded to labour. For so saith the writer of the book of Ecclesiasticus; "Honour the physician for need's sake." "From God is all cure, and the highest hath created the medicine." If we knew the virtue of every herb, we might be our own physicians, but we know them not; therefore God has ordained, that some should give themselves to the knowledge of such things, and then teach others.

We read in the second book of Kings, the twentieth chapter, when Hezekiah the king was sick, God sent Isaiah the prophet unto him, saying, "Put thy house in order, for thou shalt die." Here note by the way, that God required the king to set his things in order, to make his testament; so we should follow this example. When we perceive that God will call us out of this life, we should order all things so that there be no strifes after our departure; that men may know what every body shall have.

For that which was said to Hezekiah is said to every one of us; for God loves not strifes nor contentions; he is a God of unity and concord: therefore, to avoid all contentions, we ought to set our things in good order. Now although God sent Isaiah to tell him that he should die, yet it was not such a straight sentence, that it should be done out of hand directly: but rather God would move him by this message which Isaiah brought, to make suit for longer life. Like as he sent Jonas to Nineveh, with a straight commandment, whereby God would move them to make suit, and moan to him, and so to leave their sins and wicked life.

Now Hezekiah hearing such a message from the prophet, what did he? He fell to prayer, rehearsing how beneficial God had been unto him; saying, "I beseech thee now, O Lord, remember how I have walked before thee in truth, and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight; and Hezekiah wept very sore:" and so God sent the prophet unto him again, pro-

mising that he should live yet fifteen years more. Now, did he nothing else after that he had this promise of God? Yes, he used physic, he took a lump of figs, and laid it upon the sore, as we in sickness time lay plasters upon it. So you see by the example of Hezekiah, that it is lawful to use physic.

But now at our time, physic is a remedy prepared only for rich folks, not for poor; for the poor man is not able to pay the physician. God indeed has made physic for rich and poor; but physicians now-a-days seek only their own profits, how to get money, not how they might do good unto their poor neighbour.* Whereby it appears that they are for the most part without charity; and so, consequently, not the children of God: and no doubt but the heavy judgment of God hangs over their heads: for they are commonly all wealthy, and ready to purchase lands, but to help their poor neighbour, that they cannot do; but God will find them out one day, I doubt not.

We must beware when we go to physic, that we trust not too much to physicians, and forget God in the mean season. Like as king Asa did, who had a disease in his feet, and was much reproved because he sought not the Lord: he trusted not in God, but rather in physicians: for Scripture saith, "In his sickness he sought not the Lord, but physicians." (2 Chron. xvi.)

I knew once a great rich man, a covetous fellow, he had purchased about an hundred pound;† that same stout man came to London, where he fell sick, as stout as he was; and in his sickness, when he was exhorted to bear it well, and submit himself unto God, he cried out with horrible swearings, "Shall I die? shall I die? Physicians, physicians, call physicians." As well as he loved his gold, which was his god, yet he could find in his heart to spend it upon physicians; but in the end he died like a beast, without any repentance. This man now abused the physicians: for we may use physic, but we must not trust in physic, as Asa the king did, and that wicked man of whom I have told you. We may use God's provisions and remedies which he has left for us, yet for all that we may not trust in them.

* Let us be thankful that there is an improvement in this respect since the days of Latimer. The best medical aid is now freely given to the poor.

† An estate of that annual value, perhaps equal to two thousand pounds now.

Now to the purpose; "This woman had spent all her goods and was never the better:" well, what the physicians could not do, Christ our Saviour did, and in this manner. There was a great multitude of people about Christ—they pressed upon him: now the woman came to him among the press of the people, desiring to touch only the hem of his garment, for she believed that Christ was such a healthful man, that she should be sound as soon as she might touch him; which came to pass as she believed. For as soon as she had touched him, her issue was stopped, and her sickness gone quite and entirely. She was a shamefaced woman; she was not so bold as to speak to our Saviour, but she comes behind his back, and steals, as it were, her health. But what doth our Saviour? He would not suffer her to be hid, but saith to his disciples, "Who hath touched my clothes?" His disciples made answer, saying, "Thou seest the people thrust thee, and askest thou, Who touched me?" And he looked round about to see her that had done this. But the woman, fearing and trembling, knowing what was done within her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. No doubt this woman was ashamed to confess her sickness before the whole multitude: but what then? Christ would have it so. "I perceive, saith Christ, that virtue is gone out of me:" he saith not, my cloak, or my vestment hath done a work; but he saith, "I know virtue is gone out of me." Therefore we should not be so foolish to think that our Saviour's hem made the woman whole; but rather her good faith and trust in our Saviour.

We must not do as the foolish blind papists do, who impute great holiness unto the vestment of our Saviour. You see that this woman was made whole by Christ through him, by his divine power. And so is verified what Scripture saith, "That which is impossible unto man is possible unto God." Physicians had despaired of that woman, it passed their skill to help her; but our Saviour declared his divine power, and healed her at once, she doing nothing but touching the hem of his vestment. So God can help when men cannot.

An example we have in Scripture, when the people of Israel going out of Egypt came unto the Red Sea, they had great hills on both sides. Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, followed with all his host at their backs; the Red Sea was before them, so that there was nothing, after man's reason,

but to perish. What doth God? He divided by his infinite power the Red Sea, and delivered them out of all danger. Thus it appears that God is able to defend his people that believe in him, in an extraordinary way. Likewise in the wilderness they had no corn, nor any thing to eat, there was no ordinary way to live. What doth God? He takes an extraordinary way; he sends manna from heaven. So we see that he is able to help us supernaturally; but yet we must take heed and not tempt God, we must use all such means as he has appointed to sustain this life, else we should tempt God, which is forbidden. Likewise we read, that when David was in the wilderness, and Saul had compassed him round about, so that he, in man's judgment, could not escape; what doth God? He sends the Philistines into the land of Saul; which when Saul heard of, he went back and left David. So by that means God delivered his faithful servant David out of the hands of his cruel enemy Saul. (1 Sam. xxiii.)

By these examples we may learn to put our trust and hope in God, in all manner of troubles, as this woman did in hers: she believed in our Saviour, and therefore she was healed. All England, yea all the world, may take this woman for a schoolmistress, to learn by her to trust in Christ, and to seek help at his hands.

Again, by this woman you may learn, that God sometimes brings some low, and humbles them, to promote them, and to bring them aloft. As this woman, she was sick twelve years, and vexed with an irksome sickness; but at length she was healed, and not only that but also exalted, for Christ called her his daughter; which was the greatest promotion that could be. So likewise Joseph was in great misery, sold into Egypt, and afterwards cast into prison, where he lay a great while—he was greatly humbled: but what was the end of it? He was made a ruler over all Egypt; this was a great promotion. So likewise David was humbled, made an outlaw, an outcast, durst not show himself; but in the end he was made king over all Jewry, being at first but a shepherd, and afterwards an outlaw, but in the end he was made king. So this woman, though she was low, and loth to confess her disease, yet she was well promoted, after she had confessed it; she was made his daughter, which was a great promotion.

But mark that Christ saith not to her, My hem hath

healed thee; but he saith, "Thy faith hath holpen thee." Peradventure if we had this hem, we should make a great matter of it;* which were but foolery. Let us use prayer, which has a promise, for God promises that when we pray unto him we shall be heard; when we pray with a faithful heart, as this woman did, who believed that Christ would help her: and for this faith sake, she was so highly commended of Christ, and all the people were edified by her example. But especially Jairus, that great man, whose daughter lay sick; he had cause to strengthen his faith by the example of this woman, which woman believed the word of God, and therefore she came unto Christ.

So let us do also, let us stay ourselves upon God's word. Christ saith, "Come ye all to me." Let us follow this word, and let us come unto him, for the faith that hath God's word is a true faith; but that faith which hath not God's word is a lying faith, a false faith. As the Turks and Jews, they have a faith, but their faith is not grounded in God's word, and therefore it is a lying faith, because it hath not the word of God. Therefore, as the doctrine is nothing, and bringeth no profit, without the word of God, so the word of God bringeth no advantage except faith is there, except it be believed, else it is to no purpose. But this woman believed the word of God, she believed that Christ was come to heal the sick in soul and body, therefore according unto her belief it happened unto her; and no doubt she is a saint in heaven; for we read not that she fell afterward from Christ.

So we learn by this woman to have a good faith in Christ—we must not run hither and thither to seek the hem. No, we must believe in him, in all distresses, come unto him, and seek help and comfort by him.

Now our Saviour, after he had healed this woman, goeth to this great man's house, who called him to make his daughter well; when he cometh near unto the house, there cometh one of Jairus's servants, saying, "Thy daughter is dead, she is gone; trouble the master no longer, for all help is past." Lo, this had been enough to bring Jairus out of his faith, hearing that his daughter was dead already; it was a great temptation unto him. But here you may learn, that when you go by the way, and you have occasion to do

* Treat it as a relic.

a good deed, do it. Follow the example of Christ, for he was going to Jairus's house, and in the way he did this good deed, in healing that diseased woman; giving unto us an example, that we should intermit no occasion, but whenever we have opportunity to do good, we should do it. And here we learn another thing in our Saviour, namely, that there is no respect of persons with him, he regards not the outward show of men, whether they are poor or rich. But, as St. Peter saith, "In all people he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, he is accepted unto him." For Christ refused no man, either rich or poor. But we see they that are poor, often are ill handled in this world.

Again, we read every where that the rich and great men are ill spoken of in Scripture. The writer of the book of Wisdom also says, "Thy mighty men shall mightily suffer pains in hell:" yet this disallows not or reproves not great men and mighty rulers; but it speaks against those who abuse their power wherewith God hath endued them, oppress poor men, and do them wrong and injuries. For commonly it is seen, that they which are rich are lofty and stout, and abuse their riches or their power; though no doubt riches may be used to good purposes. But our Saviour has no respect to persons, whether they are poor or rich; for here we see how he helpeth first the poor woman, and now is going to help the rich man too, to raise up his daughter, who was dead and ready to be buried.

Further, we learn here by this Jairus to be constant and steadfast in our faith, not to be moved with every wind; for there were many things which might have moved Jairus to mistrust our Saviour, and to run from him. First, his servant, that came and told him, "Thy daughter is gone;" which was a great discomfort: for as long as she was yet alive, he had a good hope, but when he heard that she was gone, it discouraged him very sorely. Secondly, the preparation which was made for her to be buried; for all the people were come to go with the corpse,* which was a great discomfort unto him also. Thirdly, the words of our Saviour most and above all things discomforted him, when our Saviour saith, "She is not dead, but she sleepeth." By these words Jairus might have conceived an ill opinion in him, saying, What? he thinks that she sleepeth; no, if it

* In the eastern nations it was and is the general custom to bury in a few hours after death.

were so, I could raise her up myself. In such a manner Jairus was tempted. Now when they came near unto the house, there was a great number of people who laughed our Saviour to scorn when he said that she slept. Hence we may learn to be content, though we are despised and not set by in this world; seeing that our Saviour himself was thus despised. I doubt not but I have been laughed to scorn when I have preached that the way to get riches, is to give away to the poor what we have. They have called me an old doting fool; but what then?—we must be content to be despised with Christ here in this world, that we may be glorified with him in yonder world.

Here is mention made of minstrels; no doubt they have their use to make folk merry, and to drive away fantasies: at that time they used minstrels at their burials, as we here use bells. Now our Saviour seeing the people that were come to go with the corpse, and the pipers and minstrels ready, he comforted Jairus, who no doubt was in great anguish, therefore Christ saith unto him, "Fear not, but only believe; continue only in thy faith towards me, and all things shall be well." Now as he saith to Jairus, so he saith to us too, in whatever peril or tribulation we are, we should not faint, we should not fear, but believe; he will regard our faith, as much as he regarded the faith of Jairus. And we shall attain to such an end as he did. For you must consider, that the Almighty God sometimes puts off the fulfilling of his promises, and helps not for a time; but wherefore does he so? He does it for his own glory's sake; for if we should have at once that which we desire, then peradventure we should attribute it unto our ownselves and not unto God: therefore it comes not at once, that we may afterwards, when we have it, be the more thankful for his help. Therefore let us continue in prayer, and in faith, and no doubt he will help when it is the fit time. "Tarry, saith David, for the Lord; he will come, and not tarry; and when he cometh, he will set all things in good order."

Now he saith to the people, "What weep ye?" You must understand that our Saviour condemns not all manner of weeping, but only that which is without hope: of which St. Paul speaketh, "As they that have no hope." But charitable weeping is allowed, yea commanded; for St. Paul saith, "Weep with them that weep, be sorrowful

with them that be sorrowful." Yet do it measurably, as becometh Christians.

In the time of popery, before the gospel came amongst us, we went to burials with weeping and wailing, as though there were no God: but since the gospel came unto us, I have heard say, that in some places they go with the corpses, grinning and flearing,* as though they went to a bear-bating; which no doubt is naught: for as too much weeping is naught, so to be "without affection" is naught too; we should keep a measure in all things. We read in holy Scripture, that the holy patriarch Abraham mourned for his wife Sarah: so likewise did Joseph for his father Jacob; therefore to weep charitably and measurably is not ill, but good, and allowed in God's word. So likewise in the New Testament, when that holy man St. Stephen was stoned to death, the text saith, that the church "made great lamentation and weeping over him." Here I might have occasion to speak against those women who so soon forget their husbands that are departed; which I cannot very well allow, for it is a token of an imperfect love. It was a law among the Romans, that no woman should marry again before twelve months were expired; which no doubt was an honest law: but to avoid evil, let the Christian woman use her liberty.

Now when our Saviour was come to the house, he suffered no man to go in with him but Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the child: all the others he thrust out: and took the maid by the hand, saying, "Maid, I say unto thee, arise:" and her spirit came again, and she arose straightway. What shall we learn here? Truly, we shall learn here that our Saviour overcame death, that he is the Lord over death, that he has the victory over him. Secondly, we learn here that our Saviour is very God, because he commands death. For I tell you death is such an arrogant and stubborn fellow, that he will obey nobody but only God. Now he obeyed our Saviour, whereby it appears, that he is Lord over death. He said, "Maid, I say unto thee, arise;" and directly she was perfectly whole: for she ate, to signify that she was made right whole. Here our Saviour showed himself to be very God, and so the Lord over death; fulfilling the saying of St. Paul, "O death, I will be thy death." This is now a comfortable thing, that we know

* Mocking.

that Christ has overcome death, and not for himself, but for us, for our sake: so that when we believe in Christ, death shall not hurt us, for he has lost his strength and power; insomuch that it is no more a death, but rather a sleep, to all them that are faithful and fear God; from which sleep they shall rise to everlasting life. Also the wicked truly shall rise, but they shall rise to their damnation; so that it were better for them never to rise.

There are two kinds of people who will not sleep, the first are the children, who weep and grieve when they shall go to bed, because they know not the advantages that are in sleep; they know not that sleep refreshes the body, and makes us forget all the labours which we have had. This children know not, therefore they go with an ill will to bed. The others are drunkards, which are given to great drinking, they care not though they are all night at it, and commonly sleep does them harm, for it makes them heavy foreheads.* So likewise there are two kinds of men that fear death, which death in very deed ought not to be feared: for he is the best physician that ever was, he delivers at once from all miseries; therefore he ought not to be feared. But as I told you, there are two kinds of men that fear him; the children, that is to say, they that are childish towards God, that are ignorant of Scripture, that know not what great treasures we shall receive at God's hands after this life; but all are wholly set and bent upon this world: and these are the children that will not go to bed; that is to say, that fear death, that are loth to go out of this world. The others are drunkards, that is, customable sinners, that will not amend their lives; that are drunken, or drowned in sins and wickedness, that regard sin as nothing, they are not weary of it. As it is written, "The sinner when he cometh in the midst of his sin, then he careth no more for it, he despiseth it, he is not sorry for it." What remedy now? Truly, this, they that are like children, that is to say, they that are ignorant; let them get knowledge, let them endeavour themselves to understand God's holy word, wherein is set out his will, what he would have us to do. Now when they have heard God's word, and believed it, no doubt all the fear of death will be vanished, and gone quite away. For they shall find in God's word, that death has lost his strength, that he cannot hurt any more.

* Headaches.

Likewise they that are drunkards, that is to say, that are customary sinners, let them repent here where the time of grace is; let them amend their lives, be sorry for what they have done, and take heed henceforward, and believe in Christ, to be saved by and through his passion. For I tell you drunkards, you customary sinners, as long as you live in sin and wickedness, and have a delight in them, so long you are not in the favour of God, you stink before his face. For we must wrestle with sin, we must hate sin, not agree unto it; when you do so, then you ought not to be afraid of death, for the death of Christ our Saviour has killed our death, so that he cannot hurt us. Notwithstanding, death has bitter potions; but what then? as soon as he has done his office, we are at liberty, and have escaped all peril.

I will ask here a great clerkly* question, Where was the soul after it went out of this young maid? It was not in heaven, nor in hell; "There is no redemption in hell." Where was it then? in purgatory? So the papists have reasoned, it was not in hell, nor in heaven, therefore it was in purgatory; which no doubt is a vain, foolish argument. Now I will make a clerkly answer unto my question, and such an answer, that if the bishop of Rome would have gone no further, we should have been well enough, and there would not have been such errors and fooleries in religion as there have been. Now my answer is this, "I cannot tell; but where it pleased God it should be, there it was." Is not this a good answer to such a clerkly question? I think it is; other answer nobody gets of me: because the Scripture tells me not where she was.

Now you have heard that our Saviour is the Lord over death, and so consequently very God, because he raised up this young woman who was dead. But peradventure you will say, it is no great matter that he raised up a maiden who was dead; for we read of Elisha the prophet, that he raised up a young man from death. Answer—truth it is he raised him up, but not by his own power, not in his own name, but by the power of God; he did it not by himself: but Christ our Saviour, he raised up Lazarus, and this young maid, by his own divine power, showing himself to be very God, and the Son of the eternal Father: therefore he saith, "I am the resurrection and the life;" this was his doctrine. Now to prove that

* Learned.

doctrine to be true, he did miracles by his own divine power, showing himself to be very God: so did not the prophets, they were God's servants, God's ministers; but they were not gods themselves, neither did they any thing in their own name.

Now to make an end: let us remember what we have heard, let us take heed that we are not customable* sinners, but rather let us strive with sin: for I tell you, there are but few of those who spend all their time in the pleasures of the flesh, that speed well at the end; therefore let us take heed. The thief upon the cross he sped well; but what then, let us not presume to tarry in wickedness still, to the last point of our life. Let us leave wickedness, and strive with our fleshly affections, then we shall attain in the end to that felicity which God hath prepared for all them that love him: to whom, with the Son and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, *Amen.*

* Habitual.

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

A SERMON,

Preached on the Second Sunday in Advent, 1552.

LUKE xxi.

And there shall be signs in the sun and in the moon, and in the stars, and in the earth: the people shall be at their wits' end through despair; the sea and the waters shall roar, and men's hearts shall fail them for fear, and for looking after those things which shall come on the earth. For the powers of heaven shall move: and then shall they see the Son of man come in a cloud, with power and great glory. When these things begin to come to pass, then look up and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth near.

THIS gospel is read this day in the church, and it shall be for our lesson. It is taken out of the twenty-first chapter of Luke, and it makes mention of the glorious coming of our Saviour Christ, how and in what manner he shall come. For as the Scripture (2 Cor. v.) witnesses, we shall all come before the judgment seat of Christ, and there receive every one according unto his deserts: after his works he shall be rewarded of Christ, who shall be at that time the Judge; and there shall be signs and tokens before his glorious and fearful coming; for then he shall come to judgment. His first coming into this world was to suffer his painful passion, and so to deliver mankind out of the bondage and dominion of the devil. But when he cometh again he will come in another manner than he did the first time; for he will come with great power and might, with the host of heaven, with all the angels of God, and so sit at the audit, and judge all men. And this is most certain that he will come, but we cannot tell when, or

at what time his coming shall be. For the day of his coming is hidden from us, that we should be ready at all times.

Therefore I desire you, for God's sake, make yourselves ready; put not off your preparation. For seeing that we are certain that danger and peril shall come upon us, all they that are wise and godly will prepare themselves, lest they be taken suddenly unawares, or unready. And therefore I say, this day is hidden from us, that we ever should be ready. For if we should know the day or the hour, at what time he would come, no doubt we should be careless, we should take our pleasure as long as we might, till such time as we should depart. And, therefore, lest we should be made careless, this day is hidden from us; for the angels of God themselves know not the hour or moment of this great and fearful day. Neither did Christ himself know it as he was man, but as he is God he knows all things; nothing can be hid from him, as he saith himself: "The Father showeth me all things." (John v.) Therefore his knowledge is infinite, else he were not very God. But as concerning his manhood, he knew not that time, for he was truly a man, sin excepted: therefore like as he was content to suffer heat and cold, to be weary and hungry; like as he was content to suffer such things, so he was content, as concerning his manhood, to be ignorant of that day. He had perfect knowledge to do his Father's commission, to instruct us, and teach us the way to heaven, but it was not his commission to tell us the hour of this day. Therefore he knew not this day, to tell us any thing of it, as concerning when it should be. For as far as ignorance is a painful thing unto man, so far he was content to be ignorant, like as he suffered other things.

I will rather spend the time in exhorting you to make ready against that day, to prepare yourselves, than curiously recite or expound the signs which shall go before this fearful day.

"And there shall be signs in the sun and moon." Some learned men expound these tokens of the destruction of Jerusalem, but that is not the matter; if they have gone before the destruction of Jerusalem, then they have gone before the end of the world, and so they admonish us to make ready, to leave sin, lest we be taken with it.

As touching the Jews, our Saviour Christ wept over

them, and threatened what should come upon them, because they despised him, and would not receive God's holy word, and leave their sins; like as we do, who take our pleasure, and care little for him or his word, cannot suffer when our faults are told us, and repine and grudge at it, like as the Jews did. Therefore our Saviour knowing what should come upon them, wept over the city, prophesying that it should be so destroyed, that one stone should not be left upon another; and so it came to pass according unto his word. For Titus, the son of Vespasian, who was emperor at that time, destroyed that same city Jerusalem utterly, about forty years after the death of our Saviour Christ. But wherefore were they so destroyed? Because they would not believe the sayings of our Saviour Christ: they would take their pleasures, they would "follow their forefathers," as our papists are wont to say. When they cannot defend themselves with Scripture, then they defend themselves with the ignorance of their forefathers; much like unto the Jews, who could not away with the doctrine of our Saviour, because it disagreed from the customs and traditions of their forefathers.

But what happened? Their destruction fell upon them before they perceived it, and destroyed the most part of them full miserably, God knows; and not only that, but as the history shows, they that were left, and not brought to destruction, were so vilely handled, and so despised amongst all men, that thirty were sold for a penny; and so by that means they were scattered throughout all the world; and in every country where they came, they were made slaves and tributaries, and shall be so till the end of the world; for Scripture saith, "Jerusalem shall be trodden under feet, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." (Luke xxi.) By this prophecy is signified that the Jews never shall come together again, to inhabit Jerusalem and Jewry, and to bear rule there, as they have done: for by this word, "it shall be trodden under feet," is signified as much as, it shall be inhabited by, it shall be under the dominion of, the Gentiles.

Now who are Gentiles? Answer, All the people in the whole world are Gentiles, except the Jews—all others are Gentiles: we Englishmen are Gentiles, so are likewise the Frenchmen, Dutchmen, and other nations, all are Gentiles. Now the prophet saith, that Jerusalem shall not be inhabited, "till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled;"

that is to say, till all they are come into the world who are appointed of God to come; that is to say, they shall never come together again till the end of the world. Wherefore?—Because they were stiff-necked, so that they would not be ruled by God's most holy word, but despised it, and lived according to their own fantasies and vanities: like as we do now-a-days the most part of us. Therefore we may reckon that it shall go with us one day as it went with them, who now are made outcasts of the whole world; every man despiseth them, and regardeth them as nothing, for they have no dominion now, no king nor ruler, no cities nor policy.*

And though Jerusalem is builded again, yet the Jews have it no more, they shall never have dominion over it; but the Gentiles, they shall have it, it shall be in their hands. And this is the meaning of this prophecy against the Jews, and this God has performed hitherto; for the Jews have many times attempted to build it again, yet for all that they were not able to bring it to pass. For God's word will not, and cannot be falsified; for the wrath of God hangeth upon their heads, because of their wickedness, wherewith they have provoked God. Further, you must understand, that Jews not only were at Jerusalem, but they were scattered throughout all the world; in every country were some; and therefore they were not all destroyed when Jerusalem was destroyed; but for all that they were cursed in the sight of God, so that they should not inhabit that city any more.

We read in history, that in the days of the emperor Adrian, the Jews gathered themselves together out of all cities, a wonderful number of men, all the Jews which could be gotten, to the intent that they might get Jerusalem again; which Jerusalem was at that time in the emperor's hands, and therefore they made great preparations to have it again: but what did the emperor? He gathered together a great and strong host, and went against them, and in the end scattered them: so that they were without any hope to recover that city again: after which things the emperor made a proclamation, that not one Jew should come into the city, either to buy or to sell; yea, and furthermore, to the intent that they should be without any hope of recovery, he changed the name of the city, and called it Elia. So that by this story it most manifestly

* System of government.

appears, that the word of God cannot be falsified by any man's power or cunning: for though they had a strong and mighty host, yet, for all that, God, who is the Ruler of things, confounded them, so that they could bring nothing to pass after their minds, as they would have it, but rather were banished further from the city: for they were in worse case after this fighting, than they had been before; for they had an access unto the city before, which liberty afterwards they lost.

After that, in Julian the emperor's time, which emperor was an apostate, for he had been a Christian, but after he came to be emperor, he forsook the Christian faith, and all goodness and godliness—not only that, but he did all that he could to vanquish and pull down Christ's true religion; and therefore he went about to set up the Jews again, and gave them liberty to gather themselves together, and to return again to Jerusalem. And he not only gave them this liberty, but also he helped them with all manner of things, that they might bring their purpose to pass; and so upon that the Jews gathered themselves together in an infinite number of people, and went to Jerusalem, and began to make preparations for the building of the temple, and laid the foundation.

So these Jews had the emperor's favour, his aid, and help; they were rich, and able to set up their kingdom again, and to falsify the word of God, after man's reasoning; for they lacked no worldly things.

But what did God? when he saw that no man would withstand them; to verify his word, he sent a wind, a strong hurling wind, which blew away all they had prepared for the building of the temple, all the sand and mortar, and such like things, which men use in such buildings, and after that there came such an earthquake, that they were almost out of their wits. And this was not enough, but there came also fire, and burned up their works, and so finally they were scattered again one from another.

So by these histories it manifestly appears that no man's power is able to stand against God, or to disappoint him of his purposes; for Christ our Saviour had told them, that they should never come to their rule again. And so his words are verified till this day, and shall be still to the world's end; for he saith, "Heaven and earth shall perish, but my word shall endure for ever." (Matt. v.) A man would think, that there was nothing so durable as heaven

and earth is, yet for all that, they shall rather perish than the word of God be falsified.

And this appeared in the Jews, who though they had the aid and help of this great emperor, and the mighty power of this world, yet for all that, they brought nothing to pass, for God was able to confound them; and so no doubt he will confound all his enemies till the end of the world: for he is as able to verify his words now, as he was then. I would have you consider well the causes wherefore they were cast away from God, and were made a mocking-stock unto the whole world. Wherefore I say? Truly, for their wicked and sinful lives. Seeing then that they were cast out of their land, it shall be meet for us to take heed, for no doubt this is written for our instruction, to give us warning, as the epistle which is read this day exhorts us.

Now God has fulfilled his word as touching the destruction of Jerusalem; he has made true his word of wrath, think you not that he will fulfil his word of mercy too? Yes, no doubt, you may be sure of it, that he who promised that if we believe in Christ, we shall be saved, he will as well execute and bring to pass that word, as he hath brought to pass the word of his wrath and indignation over the Jews. The temple which was at Jerusalem, was called the temple of God, the people were God's people, but when they would not come unto him, and live according as he would have them to live, he cast them away, and utterly destroyed their dominions and kingdoms, and made them slaves and bondmen for ever.

And doubtless this is written for our instruction and warning; for no doubt when we follow them in their wickedness, despise God's word, and regard it as nothing, but live rather according unto our fantasies and appetites, than after his word, no doubt we shall receive the like reward with them. And though God tarry long, yet it shall be to our greater destruction; for his long-suffering and long tarrying for our amendment shall increase, augment, and make greater our punishment and damnation. But if we leave sin and wickedness, and study to live according unto his will and commandments, no doubt he will fulfil his promises which he has made unto us of everlasting life; for we have his warrant in Scripture, therefore we ought not to doubt of it: for so he saith, "So entirely hath God loved the world, that he sent his only

begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have life everlasting." (John iii.)

This is now a comfortable and a great promise which God makes unto the whole world. And no doubt he is as able to fulfil that promise of grace, as he was able to fulfil his wrathful word against the Jews. So likewise, "As truly as I live, saith the Lord God, I will not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn and live." (Ezek. xviii.) It is not for his pleasure when we are damned, therefore he sweareth an oath—we ought to believe him without an oath, yet to satisfy our minds, and to the intent that we should believe him, and be the better assured of his good will towards us, he sweareth this oath.

Now therefore, if we will follow him and leave our wicked living, convert and turn ourselves unto him, be sorry for that which is past, and intend to amend our life now forward; if we do so, no doubt we shall live with him everlastingly, world without end. Therefore let every one of us go into his own heart, and when he finds that he hath been a wicked man, an ireful man, a covetous or a slothful man, let him repent and be sorry for it; and take a good purpose to leave that same sin wherein he hath lain before. Let us not do as the Jews did who were stiff-necked; they would not leave their sins, they had pleasure in the same, they would follow their old traditions, refusing the word of God: therefore their destruction came worthily upon them. And therefore, I say, let us not follow them, lest we receive such a reward as they had, lest everlasting destruction come upon us, and so we be cast out of the favour of God, and finally lost, world without end.

"And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and in the earth." . . . "And the people shall be at their wits' end through despair:" Men shall be wonderfully fearful, they shall pine away for fear; and no doubt these shall be good men, who shall be thus troubled, with such a fear of this day, for you know the worldlings they care not for that day; yea, they will hardly believe that there shall be such a day, that there shall be another world, or at the least they would not wish that there should be another world; therefore they shall be godly men which shall be so used, to be tokens unto the world. And no doubt there have been here in England many already, who have been so vexed

and turmoiled with such fear. That same Master Bilney who was burnt here in England for God's word sake, was induced and persuaded by his friends to bear a fagot,* at the time when cardinal Wolsey was in power and bore the swing.

Now when that same Bilney came to Cambridge again, for a whole year after, he was in such anguish and agony, that nothing did him good, neither eating nor drinking, nor any other communication of God's word, for he thought that all the whole Scriptures were against him, and sounded to his condemnation. So that I many a time communed with him, for I was familiarly acquainted with him, but all things whatsoever any man could allege to his comfort, seemed unto him to make against him: yet for all that, afterwards he came to again, God endued him with such strength and perfectness of faith, that he not only confessed his faith, the gospel of our Saviour Jesus Christ, but also suffered his body to be burnt for that same gospel's sake, which we now preach in England.

Martin Luther, that wonderful instrument of God, through whom God has opened unto the world the light of his holy word, which was a long time hid in corners, and neglected;—he writes of himself, that he has been sometimes in such an agony of the spirit, that he felt nothing but trembling and fearfulness. And I myself know two or three at this present hour who are in this case.

But as concerning the ungodly, they say, all things are well with them, they care for no more than for this world. Like as in the time of the flood, they were careless, they thought all things were quite sure, till the time when the flood came upon them. And so it is at this time with the ungodly too, they care not for this day of judgment, it grieves them not, till it shall fall upon their heads one day.

It is said in Scripture that God "leadeth into hell, and bringeth up again:" and so it is with fearful Christian men; for God casts them into hell, he hides himself from them, but at length he brings them out again, and establishes them with a constant faith, so that they may be sure of their salvation and everlasting life. I knew once a woman who was seventeen years in such an exercise and

* To recant.

fear, but at length she recovered again, and God endued her with a strong and steadfast faith in the end.

Therefore no doubt these are warnings wherewith the Almighty God warns us to make ready against that horrible and fearful day, which day no doubt is not far off. For the world was ordained of God to endure, as Scripture and all learned men agree, six thousand years: now of this number are gone five thousand five hundred and fifty-two, so that there is left only four hundred and fifty lacking two; and this is but a little time, and yet this time shall be shortened as Scripture plainly witnesseth, for the elect's sake. So that peradventure it may come in my days, as old as I am; or in our children's days.*

Therefore let us begin to strive and fight betimes with sin; let us not set all our hearts and minds upon this world, for no doubt this day, whensoever it shall come, will be wonderfully fearful unto all mankind, and especially unto the wicked. There will be great alterations at that day; there will be hurly-burly, like as you see in a man when he dieth; what deformity appears, how he stretches out all his members, what a winding† is there, so that all his body comes out of his frame! so will it be at this fearful horrible day, there will be such alterations of the earth, and the elements, that they will lose their former nature, and be endued with another nature.

"And then shall they see the Son of man come in a cloud with power and great glory." Certain it is, that he shall come to judge, but we cannot tell the time when he will come: therefore seeing that he will come, let us make ready, lest he find us unprepared. And take this for a rule, that as he finds us, so he shall judge us. St. Paul to the Thessalonians, (2 Thess. iv.) when he speaks of the resurrection of the good, saith, "That at the same day the trumpet shall blow, and all shall rise which died since the world began; then they that shall be found alive upon the earth shall be changed suddenly, and shall be rapt up into the air, and so meet Christ our Saviour." All those, I say, who are content to strive and fight with sin, who will not be ruled by sin, these shall in such wise be taken up in the

* This idea was very prevalent at that time among the reformers, both in England and Germany. It is hardly necessary to observe, that there does not appear to be such a clear scriptural warrant for this calculation as Latimer supposes.

† Distortion.

air and meet with Christ, and so shall come down with him again. But as for the others which are wicked, and delight in wickedness, and will not leave it, but rather go forwards in all mischief; they shall be judged: and after they have received their sentence, they shall go to hell with the devil, and all his angels, and there be punished for their sins in hell-fire, world without end; for so it is written, "Their worm dieth not."

"The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light." You should not take these words so, as though the sun and moon should be obscured or darkened, their light being taken from them. But it is to be understood, that through the brightness of his glory they shall be obscured and darkened. The sun do doubt will shine, but its light shall not be seen, because of the brightness of his glory; like as when you set a burning candle in the sunshine, the candle burns it is true, but its light is not seen, because of the brightness of the sun. So it will be at that time with the sun, for though it is the brightest and clearest creature above all others, yet for all that, Christ with his glory and majesty will obscure it; for his light that he shall bring with him shall be so bright that the other shall not be seen. And this his coming shall be wonderfully comfortable and joyful unto those who are prepared or chosen to everlasting life: unto those, I say, who are content to leave their sins and wickedness here in this world, and live conformably to God and his holy word; who are not proud or stout; not covetous, or whoremongers; or if they have been so, they will leave it, and do no more so; and they are sorry for it from the bottom of their hearts.

They that forsake all manner of falsehood, or slothfulness, and all manner of vices; as gluttony, lechery, swearing, they I say that are content to wrestle with sin; they shall rejoice at that time and be glad beyond all measure. And this is the cause wherefore all godly and faithful people pray in this petition, "Thy kingdom come:" they desire of God the Almighty, that his kingdom, that is to say, the last day, may come, that they may be delivered from their sins, and live with him everlastingly, world without end.

As for the others, this shall be a heavy and fearful coming unto them that intend not to leave their sins and wickedness, but rather will take their pleasures here in this

world. It shall be a heinous sentence unto them, when he shall say unto them, "Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which is prepared for the devil and all his angels;" get you hence from me, for ye might have been saved, but ye would not; ye despised my words and commandments, ye regarded more your own pleasure, than what I commanded you. Hence therefore, get you hence to the devil and all his angels, after whose will and commandments ye have lived, his reward therefore ye shall have.

In such a manner Christ our Saviour will talk with the ungodly, and in the end send them to everlasting damnation. And this shall be a heavy burden for them: and though they can cloke and hide their sins in this world, yet for all that, God will open their wickedness and filthy living at that day, when all the world shall know it, and when they shall not be able to hide themselves or their sins. This day will be like unto a parliament: you know when things are amiss in a realm, or out of order, all they that are good-hearted, that love godliness, they wish for a parliament: these would fain have that all the rulers of the realm should come together, and bring all things into good order again.*

For you know that parliaments are kept only for this purpose, that things which are amiss may be amended: and so it will be at this last day, at this general parliament, where God himself with all his heavenly power will be present, and oversee all things, and hear all causes, so that nothing shall escape him. For then all the things which the devil hath brought out of order shall be amended; and the devil shall not be able afterwards to corrupt them any further; but all things shall be well for ever. Let us therefore ever have this day in fresh remembrance, that it will be a heavy day unto them that are wicked: and again, a joyful pleasant day unto them that have no delight in wickedness.

Therefore Christ saith, "When ye see these things, then hold up your heads;" that is to say, be merry and rejoice, for you know when we are merrily disposed, we hold up our heads, and laugh. So Christ bids us to hold up our heads, that is to say, to be joyful, "for our redemption is come near." So Christ comforts us, and makes us hold

* At that period the parliament was only called together occasionally.

up our heads, for our redemption is come nearer than it was before.

What! has he not redeemed us before by his death and passion? How happens it then, that our redemption is come nearer? Christ indeed redeemed us before by his death and passion: yet it appears not unto us who it is that shall be saved or damned, for we see the good and the bad both bear the name of Christians: good and bad, faithful and unfaithful, are baptized in the name of Christ. Likewise they go to the communion; so that there is no great difference here in this world, between the elect and reprobate: for the very unfaithful give alms, and do outward acts which seem unto us to be good, and to be done with a good heart, when it is nothing less. So that I say, we cannot tell, as long as we are here in this world, which are elect and which not; but at the last day, then it shall appear who is he that shall be saved; and again, who shall be damned. And therefore Christ saith, our redemption draweth near, that is to say, it shall appear unto the whole world that we are the children of God. Therefore his coming will be a glad and joyful coming unto the faithful, for they shall be the children of God; they shall be delivered and rid out of all miseries and calamities. But the unfaithful shall fall to desperation at that day: they that take their pleasures here, they that remember not this day, shall be condemned with the irrefragable and unchangeable judgment of God. And they shall not need any men of law, to go about to defend or discern their causes. No, no; the men of law shall not be troubled at that day in defending other men's causes, but rather they themselves shall be called to make an account for their doings; and there they shall be judged, so that they shall not be able to speak any thing against it, for their own hearts and consciences shall and will condemn them. And though this great and general day come not in our time, yet let us consider that we shall die, and that we have but a short time to live here in this world.

And as we die so we shall rise again. If we die in the state of damnation, we shall rise in that same state. Again, if we die in the state of salvation, we shall rise again in that state, and come to everlasting felicity, both of soul and body. For if we die now in the state of salvation, then at the last general day of judgment we shall hear this

joyful sentence, proceeding out of the mouth of our Saviour Christ, when he will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess that kingdom which is prepared for you from the beginning of the world." (Matt. xxv.) And though we have much misery here in this world, though it goeth hard with us, though we must bite on the bridle, yet for all that, we must be content, for we shall be sure of our deliverance, we shall be sure that our salvation is not far off. And no doubt they that will wrestle with sin, and strive and fight with it, shall have the assistance of God; he will help them, he will not forsake them, he will strengthen them, so that they shall be able to live uprightly; and though they shall not be able to fulfil the law of God to the uttermost, yet for all that, God will take their doings in good part, for Christ his Son's sake, in whose name all faithful people do their good works, and so for his sake they are acceptable unto God, and in the end they shall be delivered out of all miseries and troubles, and come to the bliss of everlasting joy and felicity.

I pray God, that we may be of the number of those, who shall hear this joyful and most comfortable voice of Christ our Saviour when he will say, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom which is prepared for you before the foundation of the world was laid." There are a great number amongst the Christian people, who in the Lord's prayer, when they pray, "Thy kingdom come," pray that this day may come; but yet, for all that, they are drowned in the world, they say the words with their lips, but they cannot tell what is the meaning of it; they speak it only with their tongue: which saying indeed is to no purpose. But the man or woman that saith these words, "Thy kingdom come," with a faithful heart, no doubt he or she desires in very deed that God will come to judgment, and amend all things in this world, to pull down Satan that old serpent under our feet.

But there are a great number of us who are not ready. Some have lived in this world fifty years, some sixty, but yet for all that they are not prepared for his coming; they ever think he will not come yet: but I tell you, that though his general coming be not yet, yet for all that he will come one day, and take us out of this world: and, no doubt, as he finds us, so we shall have; if he find us ready, and in the state of salvation, no doubt we shall be saved for ever, world without end.

Again, if he find us in the state of damnation, we shall be damned world without end, there is no remedy after we are once past this world; no penance will help then, nor any thing that man is able to do for us. Therefore it is right for every one of us to take heed betimes; let us not tarry too long with our amendment, lest peradventure we shall come too short, for no doubt we shall be rewarded according unto our deserts.

But there are some, and have been a great number of us, who have trusted in masses and pilgrimages, in setting up candles, and such like foolishness; but I tell you, all this will not help, it is to no purpose: for if all the masses which were said in all Christendom since the mass began, if all these masses, I say, were bestowed upon one man to bring him out of the state of damnation, it were all to no purpose, and to no effect. Therefore let us not put our hope and trust in such fooleries; for if we do, no doubt we shall deceive ourselves. Again, there are some people who defer and delay their amendment of life, till such time as they shall die; they take in hand to leave sin, when they are not able to do any more. They will take their pleasure as long as they are able; they think it time enough to repent at the last hour, when they shall depart, and forsake this world.

Such people do very wickedly, and no doubt they are in a dangerous state; for they are not sure whether they shall have at that last time grace or not to repent, and be sorry for their sins. Peradventure their hearts shall be so hardened in sin and wickedness, that they shall not be able to repent, or to be sorry for their faults. Therefore the best and surest way is to repent betimes, while we have time, and to be sorry for our wickedness, and to take an earnest mind and purpose to leave sin. If we do so, then no doubt we shall be taken up with Christ, and dwell with him in heaven everlastingly, in great honour and glory, where we shall have "joy, which no tongue can express, no eye hath seen, nor ear hath heard the inestimable felicities and treasures which God hath laid up for his faithful." 1 Cor. ii.

And like as our pleasure and joy shall be inestimable if we repent betimes, and leave sin, so likewise the pains of those who will not leave sin, but ever go forward in the same, shall be more than can be numbered, and intolerable too; their pains shall be intolerable, and yet they shall bear them.

Therefore let every man take heed how he spends his time, how he takes his pleasure in this world, for like as the general great day shall be uncertain, so also our particular day, when we shall depart this world, shall be uncertain; peradventure some of us shall die to-morrow or the next day, therefore it is proper and necessary for us to make ready, lest we be taken suddenly unawares.

"And then shall they see the Son of man come in a cloud with power and great glory." St. Paul to the Thessalonians setteth out the coming of Christ and our resurrection; but he speaks in the same place only of the rising of the good and faithful that shall be saved. But the Holy Scripture in other places witnesses, that the wicked shall rise too, and shall receive their sentence from Christ, and so go to hell, where they shall be punished world without end. Now St. Paul's words are these, "This say we unto you in the word of the Lord: that we which shall live and shall remain to the coming of the Lord, shall not come before them which sleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, and the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall arise first: then we which shall live, even we which shall remain, shall be caught up with them also in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord; wherefore comfort one another with these words." 1 Thess. iv.

By these words of St. Paul it appears, that they which died in the beginning of the world shall be by Christ as soon saved, as they who shall be alive here at the time of his coming. I would have you to note well the manner of speaking which St. Paul uses; he speaks as if the last day should have come in his time. Now when St. Paul thought that this day should have come in his time, how much more shall we think that it shall be in our time? For no doubt it will come, and it is not long thereunto; as it appears by all the Scriptures which make mention of this day: it will come, but it shall come suddenly, unawares, as a thief in the night. For a thief when he intends a robbery, to rob a man's house, to break up his chests, and take away his goods, gives him not warning, he lets not the good man of the house know at what time he intends to come, but rather he intends to spy such a time, that no man shall be aware of him. So, no doubt, this last day will come one day suddenly upon our heads, before we are aware of it;

like as the fire fell down from heaven upon the people of Sodom when unlooked for; they thought that all things were well, therefore they took their pleasures, till the time when fire fell down from heaven and burned them up all, with all their substance and goods.

So likewise it happened unto the first world, which would not amend their lives, but followed their carnal lusts and appetites,—God sent the flood upon their heads, and so destroyed them altogether. Therefore let us take heed lest this great day fall upon us, as the flood and fire fell upon the world, and upon the people of Sodom.

St. Jerome, that holy man, writes, that he ever thought he heard this trumpet of God and the archangel blow. I could wish that we would follow the example of Jerome in that point, that we would be as fearful lest this day come upon us unawares.

"And he showed them a similitude, Behold the fig-tree and all the trees, when they shoot forth their buds, ye see and know of your ownselves that summer is then near at hand." So when you see the tokens which shall go before this fearful day, it is time to make ready. But here a man might ask a question, saying, I pray you wherein standeth this preparation? How shall I make ready? About this there has been great strife, for there have been an infinite number, and there are some yet at this time, who think that this readiness standeth in masses, in setting up candles, in going of pilgrimage; and in such things, they thought to be made ready for that day, and so to be made worthy to stand before the Son of man, that is, before our Saviour Christ. But I tell you, this was not the right way to make ready. Christ our Saviour showeth us how we shall make ourselves ready, saying, "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcome with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this world, and so this day come upon you unawares; for as a snare shall it come upon all them that dwell upon the face of the whole world. Watch ye therefore continually and pray, that ye may escape all those things that shall come; and that you may stand before the Son of man." Here Christ showeth wherein this preparation standeth; namely, in keeping ourselves from superfluous eating and drinking, and in watching and praying. For how comes it to pass that the whole world is so deceitful and false? Because every man would fain fare well, every one loveth to have good meat and

drink, and to go gaily. And when they have not wherewith to get such things, then they fall to picking and stealing, and to falsehood, and to deceive their neighbours. But our Saviour he gives us warning that we should eat and drink measurably and soberly, every one according to his estate and measure. Further, we ought not to be anxious for this life, we should labour and do our business diligently, every one in that estate in which God hath set him, and let us trust in God, who no doubt will send us increase of our labour.

Therefore Christ addeth, saying, "Watch and pray:" as if he had said, Be ever in readiness, lest you be taken unawares. But those sluggards who spend their time vainly in eating and drinking, and sleeping, please not God, for he commands us to watch, to be mindful, to take heed to ourselves, lest the devil, or the world, or our own flesh, get the victory over us. We are allowed to take our natural sleep, for it is as necessary for us as meat and drink, and we please God as well in that, as we please him when we take our food. But we must take heed, that we do it according as he has appointed us; for like as he has not ordained meat and drink that we should play the glutton with it, so likewise sleep is not ordained that we should give ourselves to sluggishness, or over-much sleeping; for no doubt when we do so, we shall displease God most highly. For Christ saith not in vain, "Watch and pray." He would have us to be watchers, to have at all times in remembrance his coming, and to give ourselves to prayer, that we may be able to stand before him at this great and fearful day. Meaning that we should not trust in ourselves but call unto God, saying, "Lord God Almighty, thou hast promised to come and judge the quick and the dead; we beseech thee give us thy grace and Holy Ghost, that we may live according unto thy holy commandments, that when thou comest, thou have not cause to bestow thy fearful anger, but rather thy loving kindness and mercy upon us."

So likewise when we go to bed, we should desire God that we sleep not the sleep of sin and wickedness, but rather that we may leave them, and follow his will and pleasure; that we be not led with the desires of this wicked world. Such an earnest mind we should have towards him, so watchful we should be. For I tell you it is not a trifling matter, it is not a money matter: for our eternal salvation

and our damnation hang upon it. Our nature is to do all that is possible for us to get silver and gold; how much more then should we endeavour to make ourselves ready towards this day, when it shall not be a money matter, but a soul matter, for at that day it will appear most manifestly who they are that shall enjoy everlasting life, and who shall be thrust into hell. Now as long as we are in this world, we have all one baptism, we go all to the Lord's Supper, we all bear the name of Christians, but then it will appear who are the right Christians; and again, who are the hypocrites or dissemblers.

Well, I pray God grant us such hearts, that we may look diligently about us, and make ready against his fearful and joyful coming—fearful to them that delight in sin and wickedness, and will not leave them; and joyful unto those who repent, forsake their sins, and believe in him; who, no doubt, will come in great honour and glory, and will make all his faithful like unto him, and will say unto them that are chosen to everlasting life, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, possess that kingdom which is prepared for you from the beginning of the world."

Again, to the wicked who will not live according unto his will and pleasure, but follow their own appetites, he will say, "Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." O what a horrible thing will this be, to depart from him who is the fountain of all goodness and mercy, without whom is no consolation, comfort, nor rest, but eternal sorrow and everlasting death! For God's sake I require you let us consider this, that we may be amongst those who shall hear, "Come to me;" that we may be amongst those who shall enjoy eternal life. And no doubt we shall be amongst them, if we will be content to leave sin and wickedness, and strive with it, and let it not have the rule and governance over us; when we have done any man wrong, or have taken away his goods from him wrongfully, if we are content to restore it again; for no doubt restitution must be made, as I told you many a time before. "Restitution of a man's goods, or his name, must needs be made:" for in that point agree all the writers new and old, they all say that restitution must needs be made, either in effect or affect.* For it is a sure probation, that this man or woman is not rightly sorry for his sins and wickedness, that is not content to make restitution when

* Fully, or to the utmost of our power.

he has taken away things unlawfully against conscience from his neighbour.

Therefore he that is content to leave his sins, and to make restitution of such things as he hath taken away wrongfully from his neighbour, shows himself to be a truly penitent man: so likewise they that live in soberness, and abuse not the gifts of God, but use them with thanksgiving. Also, he that liveth chastely keeps himself from filthiness, and marries in the fear of God, according unto his ordinance, he maketh ready for that day.

And as concerning young folks, all the writers agree that with a moderate diligence young folk may live chastely, when they are well governed and ruled, and kept from idleness. Then it is no great matter for them to live chaste as long as they are growing, but such young persons must beware above all things of foul and filthy talk, for it is as St. Paul saith, "Foul and filthy talk destroy good manners, and good bringing up:" and then again young folks must beware of overmuch eating and drinking; for St. Jerome saith, He that is a great drinker of wine, I will never believe that he is a chaste man: therefore let young unmarried folk beware of drinking and of idleness, for when the devil finds them idle, it is down with them, they are soon overcome.

Therefore let them ever be well occupied till they come to age, and then let them be married in the Lord; for the Scriptures most highly praise marriage. St. Paul saith, "Marriage is honourable amongst all men." Further, let us take heed of swearing; for we may not swear at all, and we may swear by nothing but by God; by whom we may not swear, except it is a great and urgent cause, except I am called thereunto by a magistrate; and when I am called so, then I must swear by nobody else, save only by God.

Therefore they that are given to swearing do very wickedly, and no doubt God's vengeance hangeth over their heads. For certain it is, that he that is a great swearer is also a great liar. But, as I said before, they that will leave such wickedness, and will live conformably unto God's word, and then believe in Christ our Saviour, trust and believe to be cleansed from their sins through his death and passion, no doubt they shall hear this joyful sentence of Christ our Saviour, "Come to me, ye blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom which is prepared for

you from the beginning of the world." We esteem it to be a great thing to have a kingdom in this world, to be a ruler, to be aloft, and bear the swing; how much more then should we regard the kingdom which Christ our Saviour offereth unto us, which kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, where there shall be no end of joy and felicity; therefore all they that will be content to follow our Saviour's steps, to suffer with him here in this world, and bear the cross after him, they shall reign with him in everlasting glory and honour: which grant us God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

CHRIST THE TRUE MESSIAH.

A SERMON

Preached on the Third Sunday in Advent, 1552.

MATTHEW xi.

When John being in prison heard the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that shall come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again what ye have heard and seen, &c.

THIS gospel is read in the church this day, and it shall serve us this day for our lesson.

It begins thus: "When John being in prison heard the works of Christ;" and here is to be considered of whom he had heard of these wonderful works which our Saviour did, for he could not hear them without a teller—somebody told him of them. The evangelist St. Luke, in the seventh chapter, shows how, and by whom John Baptist heard such things which our Saviour Christ did; namely, by his own disciples. For when our Saviour had raised up the widow's son, who was dead at Nain, the disciples of John came by and by unto John their master, and told him all things; namely, how Christ raised up that same young man who had been dead already. And this is a thing to be marvelled at, that John had so much liberty, that his disciples could come at him, and speak with him: Herod the king being a cruel man, a heathen king, a miscreant, a man of unbelief. No doubt it is a great matter that his disciples could have liberty to speak with him; for a man would think that no man should have been permitted to come near him. For I know that in Christian realms, some being cast into prison for the truth's sake, for God's word sake, it has not been suffered that their friends should

have come near unto them. And here it appears most manifestly that Christian princes have sometimes used God's preachers more cruelly and extremely than the Gentiles used the preachers sent unto them from God to teach them; they were more straitly holden and more extremely handled than John was. So we read likewise of St. Paul, who was cast into prison at Rome by that wicked and cruel tyrant the emperor Nero; which emperor, though he was a cruel tyrant, a wicked man, and a venomous persecutor of God's church, and his holy word, yet for all that Paul had liberty to speak with every one that would come unto him, and commune with him. So that there came unto him those that would, and they might speak with him what they would; for St. Luke saith, in the last chapter of the Acts, these words: "And Paul dwelt two full years in his lodging, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus with all confidence, no man forbidding him." Here by these words we may perceive, that Paul had liberty to say his mind, and to commune with his friends, he was not so straitly kept. But we see and have had experience, that preachers who profess the same word which Paul taught, are more straitly handled in Christian realms, than they were in times past, when the rulers and princes were not Christians. Christian princes so called are more earnest to extinguish God's word and his true religion, than the heathens were who knew not, or would not know God.

But now you might ask, what manner of works were those which our Saviour had done in the presence of John's disciples, who directly afterward went and told their master? What special things had our Saviour wrought? Answer, Luke the evangelist shows a great and marvellous act, which Christ our Saviour had done immediately as John's disciples came unto him. The story is this: "When Christ went into a city which is called Nain, and many of his disciples following him, and much people: when he was come nigh to the gate of the city, behold there was a dead man carried out, which was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and much people of the city went with her." And here you may note by the way, that these citizens had their burying-place without the city, which no doubt is a laudable thing: and I do much marvel that London, being so rich a city, hath not a burying-place

without; for no doubt it is an unwholesome thing to bury within the city, specially at such a time when there are great sicknesses, so that many die together. . . And I think that it is the occasion of much sickness and disease: therefore the citizens of Nain had a good and laudable custom, to bury their corpses without the city, which example we may follow.

Now when our Saviour saw this corpse, and the widow, who was now a miserable and sorrowful woman, for she had lost first her husband, and afterwards her son, in whom she had all her hope and comfort in this world: him she had lost now, therefore she was sorrowful, and not without cause. But what did our Saviour? He comforted her, saying, "Weep not." Here may all widows, who are destitute of comfort in this world; here, I say, they may learn to trust in Christ, and to seek aid and help by him. For no doubt, like as he comforted this miserable widow, so he will comfort and help all those who call upon him in their need and necessity. For his hand is not shortened, or his power diminished; he is as strong, as rich, and as mighty as ever he was; therefore let widows learn here to seek aid and help by him.

Now, when he had comforted her with his words, he came nigh, and touched the coffin, and they that bare the coffin stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say unto thee, arise." And he that was dead sat up and began to speak. Now upon this there went such a rumour of it throughout all the countries, that every man marvelled at it. And John's disciples went to their master, and told him of it, what wonderful things he did. Note here, that when we hear that our Saviour is a doer of such wonderful supernatural works, it should be a wondrous great comfort to us. For by this his deed, it appeared manifestly, that he is master over death, and has power to command him: so that death is in his dominion. For to raise a man up, whom death hath devoured already, is as much as to command death. But I tell you, Death is such an arrogant fellow, and so proud, yea and of such great might and strength, that he will give no man place, nor submit himself to any man, save only unto God—unto him he must obey, and humble himself before his divine majesty. And therefore it appears here that our Saviour is very God, because death, that stout fellow, must obey him; he is not able to withstand or disobey his commandments; which is

a most comfortable thing unto us who believe in such a Saviour, who hath power over death. And therefore, if he hath power over death, then we shall be sure that death shall not and cannot hurt us who believe in him: for when we believe in him, he is able to defend us from death, hell, and the devil, so that they shall not be able, with all their might or power, to hurt us, or do us any mischief; but we shall have life everlasting. For he saith, "He that believeth in me, though he die, yet he shall live." (John xi.) That is to say, though he depart out of this natural bodily life, yet for all that, he shall live everlastingly with me, world without end.

This is now an exceeding comfort to all Christian people for they may be assured that when they believe in Christ, and Christ taketh their part, there shall be nothing either in heaven or in earth that shall be able to hurt them, or hinder them of their salvation: and so we learn by this wonderful miracle which our Saviour did before all the multitude, that he proved himself to be very God, and one that hath power over death. But peradventure you will say, No; it follows not that because he raised up the dead, that he is very God; for we read in the Old Testament, that Elias and Elisha, those holy prophets of God, did such works also; they raised up the dead as well as he; and yet for all that they were not gods, but sinful men as we are: though they had such a special gift of God, yet they were not gods, nor yet took upon them to be gods.

To this question or objection I will answer hereafter, if I forget it not. In the mean season, I will ask another question, which is this: What should move John's disciples to come, and tell him the miracles which Christ our Saviour did? Think you they came with a good will to set out Christ, and to magnify his doings, or came they with an ill will, or envious heart, which they bare towards Christ? Answer, They came with an ill will and envious heart which they bare against Christ, as it appears most manifestly, by the circumstances, being well considered. For you must understand, that John had very much ado to bring his disciples to Christ: they thought that Christ and his doings, his conversations, were nothing, in comparison of John. For John's strait* life which he led in the wilderness, made such a show and outward glistering, that

* Strict.

our Saviour was regarded for nothing in comparison with him. For our Saviour led not so hard and strait a life as John did; he ate and drank, and would come to men's tables when he was bidden; he would keep company with every body, rich and poor, whosoever received him, and would believe in him: but John was in the wilderness, out of the company of all men. Therefore the disciples of John much more regarded John their master, than Christ their Saviour. And therefore they ever lay upon John, in exhorting him, that he would take upon him to be Christ, and the Saviour of the world. And when they had heard of any miracles that Christ had done, they by and by came unto their master, and told him of it disdainfully, as who should say, Thus and thus, we have heard that Christ has done, wherefore showest not thou thyself also? Wherefore workest thou not miracles as well as Christ doth? Every man speaks of him; do thou somewhat too, that the people may know thee to be a great man, as well as Christ.

We read in the gospel of Matthew, that John's disciples came once to Christ, and quarrelled with him, saying, "Wherefore fast we and the Pharisees so many times, but thy disciples fast not at all?" They thought in their own opinions, that John's life was a great deal more to be esteemed than Christ's, because John's life was more painful in the outward show of the world; therefore it grieved them, that Christ should be more esteemed than John. So that we may perceive by John's disciples, that they had a good zeal, "but not according unto knowledge." For it is a good thing for a servant to love his master; but John's disciples did wrong, in that they envied Christ, and went about to stir up their master to take upon him to be Christ.

Now John, intending to correct and amend their false opinion, which they had of Christ and of him; for they regarded him too much, and Christ, who was to be most regarded, they esteemed for nothing, in comparison of John; therefore John, that good and faithful man, seeing the ignorance of his disciples, acted a wise part; for hearing them talk of the wonderful works which Christ our Saviour did, he sent them unto Christ with this question, "Art thou he that should come, or shall we look for another?"

When we look only upon the outward show of these

words, a man might think, that John himself was doubtful whether Christ were the Saviour of the world or not, because he sent his disciples to ask such a question of him. But you must understand, that it was not done for John's sake, to ask such a question, but rather for his disciples' sake. For John thought that this would be the way to bring them to a good trade, namely, to send them to Christ. For, as for John himself, he doubted not; he knew that Christ was the Saviour of the world; he knew it, I say, whilst he was yet in his mother's womb. For we read in the gospel of Luke, that after the angel came unto Mary and brought her such tidings, she arose, and went through the mountains, and came to Jerusalem to Elizabeth her cousin, and as she saluted her, John being unborn, yet knew Christ, who should be born of the Virgin Mary.

After that, we read in the third chapter of Matthew, that when John should baptize Christ, he said unto Christ, "I have more need to be baptized of thee, than thou of me." So that it manifestly appears that John doubted not of Christ, but knew most certainly that he was the eternal Son of God, and the Redeemer which was promised unto the fathers to come into the world; for it was told him from above, that upon whomsoever he should see the Holy Ghost coming down from heaven visibly, that same was he; which afterwards happened; for John, after he had baptized him, saw the Holy Ghost come down in the form of a dove. Further, John pointed to him with his finger, saying, "See the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world." So, I say, it is most evident, that John himself doubted not, for he knew assuredly that Christ was the Saviour, but he did it only to remedy the doubts of his disciples. Now when John's disciples came to Christ, they did their message, saying, "Art thou he that should come, or shall we look for another?" What did Christ?—He made not answer with words, but with deeds; he made not much ado in setting out himself with great words, but he showed himself to be Christ indeed. For he did such miracles as no man else could do, but only he who was both very God and man. I would wish that we would do so too; that when we are asked a question, whether we are Christians, whether we have the gospel, the true word of God, or not; I could wish I say, that we could show our faith by our works and

godly conversation, like as he showed himself to be Christ, by his acts and deeds: but I tell you, we are far otherwise, our acts and deeds disagree far from our profession. For we are wicked, we care not for God's laws, nor his words; we profess with our mouth that we are haters of sin, but our conversation shows that we love sin, that we follow the same, that we have a delight in it. So it appears, that our words and deeds agree not; we have God's holy word in our mouth, but we follow the will and pleasure of the devil in our outward conversation and living. But Christ did not so; for he showed himself by his outward works and conversation that he was very* Christ the Saviour of the world. So we should do too; we should live so uprightly, so godly, that every one might know us by our outward conversation to be very Christians. We should so hate and abhor sin, that no man justly might or could disallow our doings.

But what manner of works did Christ, whereby he showed himself to be the very Messias and Saviour of the world? Answer. He healed all manner of diseased folks, the blind, the lame, the lepers, and all others which would come unto him, and desire help at his hands. And finally, he preached the gospel, this joyful tidings unto the poor, unto them Christ preached the gospel. But I pray you, how happened it, that he saith "The poor receive the gospel?" Answer. Because the most part of the rich men in this world despise and contemn the gospel; they esteem it for nothing: why? Wherefore despise they the gospel? Because they put their hope, trust, and confidence in their riches. For the most part of the rich men in this world, (I will not say all,) either put their hope in their riches, or else they come naughtily by their riches, or else they keep them ill: they heap them up together, or else they spend them ill. So that it is a very rare thing to find a godly rich man; for commonly they are given to gather and to make heaps, and so forget the poor in the mean season, whom they ought to relieve: or else when they spend them, they spend them naughtily, not as God hath appointed unto them; namely, to help their poor and needy neighbour, but rather use them to excess, wantonness, and pleasure. Therefore Christ saith, "The poor receive the gospel;" for they are most meet† thereunto,

* The true. † Prepared, fitted.

they are all comfortless in this world, and so most meet to receive the gospel.

The prophets long before had prophesied of these works which Christ when he should come should do: for so it is written; "God cometh his own self, and will deliver you: then shall the eyes of the blind be lightened, and the ears of the deaf opened; then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the dumb man's tongue shall give thanks. In the wilderness also there shall be well-springs." (Isa. xxxv.) This text of the prophet witnesses that Christ is very God, for he has done such tokens and miracles of which the prophet speaketh. Now in the same prophet it is further written, that Christ should preach the gospel unto the poor comfortless people; for so he saith, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, for the Lord hath anointed me to preach good things unto the poor, that I might bind up the wounded hearts, that I might preach deliverance to the captive, and open the prison to them that are bound; that I might declare the acceptable year of the Lord." (chap. lxi.)

Here the prophet prophesied that when Christ should come, he should be a worker of such acts, and a preacher who should preach the gospel unto the poor: and therefore now, when the disciples of John came unto him, demanding of him whether he were Christ or not, he answered by his works. Like as he saith in another place in the gospel to the Pharisees: "The works which I do, bear witness of me." As who should say, I prove myself what I am by my works. Again he saith, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not." So that most manifestly he proves himself to be that prophet which was spoken of before by the prophets and other holy men of God. John the evangelist, in his gospel saith, "And many other signs truly did Jesus, in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book. These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is Christ the Son of the living God, and that in believing ye might have life through his name." This is a very remarkable saying, and most comfortable to all troubled consciences. Jesus has done many things which are not written, but these are written that we should believe him to be Christ: that Jesus, Mary's son, who was born at Bethlehem, and nourished at Nazareth, is the Saviour of mankind; and so in believing in him, we shall have life everlasting. So that

there never was one who believed in Christ that was lost, but all believers were saved; therefore it is not to be doubted, but that if we will believe we shall be saved too. We read in a book which is entitled, "The Lives of the Fathers;" in that same book we read that there was once a great holy man, as he seemed to all the world, worthy to be taken up into heaven: now that man had many disciples, and at a time he fell sick; and in his sickness he fell into great agony of his conscience, insomuch that he could not tell what to do. Now his disciples standing about him, and seeing him in this case, they said unto him: "How chances it that you are so troubled, father? for certainly there was nobody so good a liver, so holy as you have been; therefore you have not need to fear; for no doubt but you shall come to heaven." The old father made them answer again, saying; "Though I have lived uprightly, yet for all that it will not help me; I lack something yet." And so he did indeed, for certainly if he had followed the counsel of his disciples, and had put his trust in his godly conversation, then no doubt he would have gone to the devil. For though we are commanded to do good works, and we ought to do them; yet for all that, we must beware how we do them: when we do them to be saved by them, then we do them not as we ought to do; then we thrust Christ out of his seat and majesty. For indeed the kingdom of God is merited, but not by us. Christ merited the kingdom of heaven for us, through his most painful death and passion.

There have been many men among the heathen who lived very well and uprightly, as concerning their outward conversation; but for all that they went to the devil in the end, because they knew not Christ: for so saith Scripture, "Whosoever believeth not in the Son he is judged already." Therefore let us learn to know Christ, and to believe in him, for knowledge must go before belief; we must first hear the word of God and know it; and afterwards we must believe the same, and then we must wrestle and strive with sin and wickedness, as much as is possible for us, and so live well and godly, and do all manner of good works which God has commanded us in his holy laws; and then we shall be rewarded in everlasting life, but not with everlasting life; for the everlasting life is a gift of God, a free gift given freely unto men through Christ.

Now when the disciples of John were come to Christ, and had done their errand, and had asked him whether he were Christ or not, our Saviour said unto them: "Go and show John again what you have heard and seen." And here we may learn by the way what a patient man our Saviour Christ was, who could so well bear with the grossness* of John's disciples: for they had heard many times before from John their master, that Christ was the Saviour of the world, yet they could not believe it; and so with their unbelief they came to Christ, who refused them not, nor yet reviled them, but treating them most lovingly and gently, bore with their weakness, leaving us an example to do so. For we may learn here by his example not to be hasty, but to bear with our neighbours: though they are not at present such as we would have them to be, yet we should not by and by revile them, or banish them out of our company, as obstinate fellows; but rather bear with their weakness, like as Christ bore with the disciples of John.

Now to my question which I moved before: how could the works which our Saviour did in raising up the dead, how could they prove him to be the Saviour of the world, who was promised of God by his holy prophets, when other holy men did the same works as well as he? And this must be answered too; we must have no doubts in that matter. For when we doubt whether he be the very Saviour or not, then we cast down the foundation of our faith, and so bring ourselves to the very pit of hell. Therefore this shall be my answer: Elias and Elisha raised up dead bodies, to prove by such miracles that they were the right ministers of the living God, and that their doctrine was the true doctrine, and the very word of God; to that end they did their miracles, but they never said we are Christs, or we are the sons of God, yea, and very Gods. No, no; they never took upon them such things: but our Saviour, when he did the same works, he took upon him to be Christ, to be the Saviour of the world, to be the true Son of God; and so to confirm his sayings, he did such works: therefore he saith, "I am the bread of life." "I am the resurrection and the life." "I am the way, the truth, and the life." Yea, and when he talked with the woman at the well, she said unto him, "When the Messias cometh he shall teach us all things." Then he saith

* Ignorance, stupidity.

unto her, "I am he that speaketh unto thee: I am that same Messias which was to come, and promised of God; I am he." (John iv.)

Further, he saith, "Come to me, all ye that labour and are laden, and I will ease you." (Matt. xi.) So it appears that Christ is the very Saviour of the world, because he did the deeds of our Saviour: and then again, he took upon him to be so indeed, and openly confessed it.

Further, the time proves that Christ should then come: for so it was prophesied by the good holy father and patriarch Jacob; when he blessed his sons, he said, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, and a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come: and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." (Gen. xlix.)

Now at that time, when our Saviour was come, the sceptre was taken from Judah: for all Jewry was under the dominion of the Romans, therefore Shiloh must needs be come. So it appears that by reason of the time, Christ must needs come at that season. So likewise Daniel in his vision showed, that after sixty-two weeks should Christ be slain, and they shall have no pleasure in him. So you see that by reason of the time, he must needs be the right Saviour of all mankind. Again, Christ raised up the dead, and healed the sick in his own name, by his own authority: but so did not the prophets, or the apostles, for they did it not in their own strength, but by the help of God. St. Peter raised up Dorcas, that good godly woman, but not by his own power: but Christ our Saviour did all things, "as he that had authority," saying, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise." So his works which he did by his own divine power prove him to be very God, and the same Saviour which was promised unto the world.

Now when our Saviour had told the disciples of John, his works and miracles which he did, he adds a pretty clause, and giveth them a goodly privy nip,* saying, "And blessed is he that is not offended by me." Here he touches them, he rubbeth them at the gall:† he did not mean John, for John was not offended, but he meant them themselves, for they were offended because of his familiar and mean conversation. But you will say, How can a man be hurt by him from whom cometh no hurt at all? I tell you, John's disciples were hurt at Christ, and yet the fault was

* Rebuke. † Tender part, sore place.

not in Christ, but in them: Christ lived a common life, he was a good familiar man, he ate and drank as others did; he came to men's tables when he was called; insomuch that some called him a glosser:* therefore the disciples of John, seeing his simple life, were offended with him.

But I pray you, should Christ have forsaken his manner of living and follow the life of John, because some were offended with him? No, not so, "They took offence themselves, he gave them none." He did according unto his calling, as he was appointed of his Father.

Here I have occasion to speak of offences. *Scandalum*† is slander, but it has another signification with us, it is taken for an offence or hurt: you may define it so. An offence is when I say or do any thing great or small, or speak any word whereby my neighbour is made the worse. But he may be offended two manner of ways, first when I do well, and another man is offended with my well-doings. Then he taketh offence, I give him none. Again, an offence is given, when I do wickedly, and with my ill example hurt my neighbour, this is offence given. There were many in our Saviour's time who were offended with him, because he preached the word of God and rebuked sins, but Christ saith, "Let them alone," care not for them, let them be offended as long as they will: we may not leave the preaching of the truth for offences' sake, because my neighbour cannot away with it."‡ (Matt. xv.) No, not so; let us say the truth, having a calling, as indeed every man hath a calling, and especially preachers. We read in the gospel of John, when our Saviour saith unto his disciples and to the other people, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, ye shall have no life in you." By these sayings of Christ, many were offended with him, insomuch that the greater number went from him, and forsook him; they could not abide him. Now, was Christ to be blamed for that, because he said so? No, no; for he said nothing but the truth. So likewise the preacher, when he saith the truth, is not to be blamed though some are offended with him.

When Moses came into Egypt, what inconveniences happened because of his coming! Insomuch that almost the whole land perished: but was he faulty? No; for he did nothing but what God commanded him; but the

* A hypocrite. † An offence or slander. ‡ Endure it.

Egyptians, they were obstinate, they would not obey the voice of God. Therefore Moses hurt them not, but they hurt themselves with their infidelity and obstinate heart. So you see, that we may not leave the truth unspoken, or an honest deed undone, because some will be offended with it.

As for example: here is a priest who perceives by himself that he has not the gift of chastity, and therefore would fain marry, but he is afraid that some of his parishioners should be offended with his marriage. Now, shall he leave his marriage because some will be offended with him? No, that he should not; let the priest instruct his parishioners, and tell them out of the word of God, that it is as lawful for him to marry, as for another man. After he has so taught them, if they will not believe him, or refuse his doctrine, let him marry, and care not for their being offended. I told you before, that there are two manner of offences, offence given, and offence received; the first is, when I offend my neighbour by my wickedness, by my outrageous and inordinate living. The second is, when he is offended with me when I do a good deed; but for all that, we ought not to leave an honest act, because of another man's offences. But I tell you, it is a perilous thing, and a heinous sin to do such a thing, whereby my neighbour shall be made the worse by my wicked example. As we have an instance in Jeroboam, who offended all Israel: for he went and set up two golden calves, by which act he gave occasion to the whole people to commit idolatry against God; and this was a heinous, horrible sin; for of it came wonderful mischief afterwards. So likewise we read of a great man in Scripture, who is called Zimri, who set an ill example by committing fornication, whom Phineas that godly man killed: for his sin was a stumbling block to all the people of Israel. So you see that an offence given is a wicked act which I do, whereby my neighbour is the worse. Therefore I pray you for God's sake to beware of such offences: for it is written in the gospel of Matthew, "Wo be unto that man or woman by whom offences come." Therefore I say, let us beware, let us keep ourselves within the hedges of God's holy word, so that all our doings may be agreeable unto the same; and then, if when we agree with God's word, the world will needs be offended with us, let us not care for that, for they hurt not us, but them-

selves. Let us therefore take good heed to ourselves, lest we do any thing whereby our neighbour might be offended: for our Saviour saith, "Whosoever offends one of these little ones, which believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the deep of the sea."

Therefore let parents take heed how they speak in the presence of their children, and masters ought to take heed how they set examples unto their servants: for there are some masters and parents, that will speak so filthily before their children and servants, that it is out of measure;* and not only that, but they will also swear in the presence of their children, yea they will teach them to swear! Our Saviour, how earnestly he commanded us to beware of swearing: therefore parents ought to take heed, and especially such as are rulers over houses, or officers: if they swear, all the household will swear too, for it is commonly seen that the servant followeth the ill behaviour of his master; but the servants are not so hasty to follow their masters in goodness. And this swearing is so come into use, that we can say nothing at all, but we must swear thereunto, by God, or by my faith, or such words; but there are some, who when they are reprehended because of their swearing, will say, that men will not believe them except they swear, which is a token that they have been great liars. For every true man is to be believed without swearing: and therefore take this for a certain rule, that when a man is not ashamed, or has not a conscience to break this law of God, that is to swear, he will not be ashamed, neither have any conscience to lie, to do against the commandment; for because swearing is forbidden as well as lying, and lying as swearing, therefore he that makes no conscience of the one, will make less conscience of the other. I myself have sometimes used to say when very earnest, Yea, by St. Mary, and such like things, which indeed is naught.† For we are commanded not to swear at all.

Therefore woe be unto them that swear—that offend their neighbours or their children by swearing, or other wickedness. For it were better that a millstone were hanged about our neck than to offend any body: that is to say, it were better to be killed bodily, to suffer extreme punishment bodily: for they that offend are killers of their neigh-

* Very wrong. † Evil.

bours. But we are faulty, the most part of us, in two ways: first, we will be offended when there is no offence given; and again, we will be bold to do that thing whereby our neighbour may be justly offended. But he that is a charitable man, will not be lightly offended; for certainly it is a great fault to be rashly offended, and to judge our neighbour's doings to be naught and wicked, before we know the truth of the matter, for we cannot see the hearts of men. Therefore as long as the thing is not openly wicked, let us not be offended. Again, if the thing be necessary and good, let us not fear offences; yet we must take heed that we walk charitably. We have a liberty in the gospel, yet we must take heed that we use that same liberty aright, according unto the rule of charity; for St. Paul saith, "All things are allowed unto me, but all things perfect not." (1 Cor. vi.) I must bear with him that is weak in faith. As my liberty must be subject to charity, so my charity must be agreeable to the sincerity of the faith; for we may by no means leave the truth, or leave God's word, which we must most steadfastly keep.

We have a law that saith, "Abstain from all show of evil." So that it is not a small matter to be a Christian. We read a story that one Attalus and Baldwin were cast into prison for God's religion's sake; in which prison there were some who would not eat flesh, nor drink wine. Now the same Attalus was instructed of God, that he should admonish those prisoners of their rigorousness, which Attalus did, and so at length brought them to leave their foolishness. But we cannot do so here in England; for our indifferency is taken away by a law; if there were no such law, then we might as well eat flesh upon Fridays as upon holydays.* And this law is but a matter of policy, not of religion or holiness; and we ought to live according unto the laws of the realm, made by the king's majesty; for in all manner of things, we ought to keep ourselves within the hedges of the laws; in eating and drinking, in apparel, in pastimes. In fine, our whole conversation should be agreeable unto the laws. For Scripture saith, that we should be obedient to all manner of ordinances, made by the lawful magistrate; therefore we must spend our life, and take our pastime so that it may stand with the order of the realm. O that we would have in consideration these offences, and take heed of giving offence! And again, to beware of

* These laws have long since been done away.

hastiness or rashness in judging or condemning our brother, for to be offended hastily is against charity.

But the world is so full of offences, and so ready to be offended, that I think if our Saviour were here upon earth again, as he hath been bodily, and should talk with a woman at the well as he once did, I think that there would be some found amongst us, who would be offended with him, would think ill of him and her: but I pray you beware of rash offences and rash judgments. If my neighbour does somewhat whereby I am offended, let me go unto him, and speak with him; but to judge him at once without knowledge, that is naught. And further, we must follow this rule, "No man should seek his own profit, but his neighbour's." I must use my liberty so that my neighbour be not hurt by it, but rather edified. So did St. Paul when he circumcised Timothy; and at another time, when he perceived that the people were stout in defending the ceremonies of the law, he would not circumcise Titus.

Now when the disciples of John were gone, then he began to speak to the people of John the Baptist; for our Saviour had a respect to John, to his estimation, lest the people should think that John were in doubt of him, whether he were Christ or not. "What went ye out into the wilderness to see, a reed that is shaken of the wind?" There was once an old man who counselled a young man, that he should be like a reed—he should be ruled as the world goeth; for a reed never breaks, but it follows the wind which way soever it bloweth, and the oak-tree sometimes breaks because it will not bend. But Christ spoke these words to the great commendation of John, because of his steadfastness; there are many reeds now-a-days in the world, many men will go with the world: but religion ought not to be subject unto policy, but rather policy unto religion. I fear there will be a great number of us reeds, when there shall come a persecution that we must suffer for God's word sake. I fear me there will be a great many that will change, who will not be constant as John was.*

When a man is in the wrong or erroneous way, then he may and should change: but "Stand fast," saith St. Paul—we must endure and stand steadfast in that which is

* This apprehension proved but too true within two years from that time.

good and right. In God's word we should stand fast, but not in popery. So that first we must see that we are right, and afterwards we must stand. This is a great praise wherewith our Saviour praised John; for it is no small matter to be praised of Him who knoweth the thoughts of all men.

"Or what went ye out to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft raiment, are in kings' houses." Here in these words, our Saviour condemned not fine gear,* as silk, satin, or velvet: for there is nothing so costly but it may be worn, but not of every body. Kings and great men are allowed to wear such fine gear; but John he was a clergyman, it behoved not him to wear such gear. Peradventure if he had been a flatterer, as some are now-a-days, then he might have gotten such gear; but John, knowing his office, knew well enough that it behoved not him to wear such fine gear: but how our clergymen wear them, and with what conscience, I cannot tell; but I can tell it behoves not them to wear such delicate things. St. Peter disallows gorgeousness in women; how much more then in men? for one would think that women should have more liberties in such trifles; but Holy Scripture disallows it, and not only in women, but also in men. He names women, because they are more given to that vanity than men are; for Scripture sometimes by this word women, understands men too; and again, by the word men it understands women too: for else we should not find in all Scripture a command that women should be baptized.

Here were a good place to speak against our clergymen who go so gallantly now-a-days. I hear say that some of them wear velvet shoes and velvet slippers; such fellows are more fit to dance the morrice-dance than to be admitted to preach. I pray God amend such worldly fellows, for else they are not fit to be preachers.

Now I will make an end as concerning offences. Peradventure you will say, How chances it that God suffers such offences in the world? Answer, "The judgments of the Most High are inscrutable;" (Rom. xi.) God can use them to good purposes; therefore he saith, "It is necessary that there be offences." Perhaps you will say, Why should we then be damned for offences, when offences are needful? Answer, When we do ill, we shall receive our

* Clothing.

reward for our illness, for it is no thanks to us, when God can use them to good purposes; we ought to be punished when we do naught. Therefore the best is to beware and take heed of offences, and all other ungodliness, and live uprightly in the fear of God. So that we may inherit the life everlasting, which he hath prepared for us from the beginning of the world; which grant us God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, one God and three persons, now and ever, world without end. *Amen.*

ON CHRISTIAN LOVE.

A SERMON

Preached on the twenty-eighth of October, A. D. 1552.

JOHN XV.

This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.

SEEING the time is so far spent, we will take no more in hand at this time, than this one sentence; for it will be enough for us to consider this well, and to bear it away with us. "This I command unto you, that ye love one another." Our Saviour himself spake these words at his last supper: it was the last sermon that he made unto his disciples before his departure; it is a very long sermon. For our Saviour, like as one that knows he shall die shortly, is desirous to spend that little time that he has with his friends, in exhorting and instructing them how they should lead their lives. Now among other things that he commanded, this was one: "This I command unto you, that ye love one another." The English expresses as though it were but one, "This is my commandment." I examined the Greek, where it is in the plural number, and very well; for there are many things that pertain to a Christian man, and yet all those things are contained in this one thing, that is LOVE. He lappeth up all things in love.

Our whole duty is contained in these words, "Love together." Therefore St. Paul saith, "He that loveth another, fulfilleth the whole law;" so it appeareth that all things are contained in this word Love. This love is a precious thing: our Saviour saith, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye shall love one another."

So Christ makes love his cognizance, his badge, his livery. Like as every lord commonly gives a certain livery to his servants, whereby they may be known that they pertain unto him; and so we say, yonder is this lord's servants, because they wear his livery: so our Saviour, who is the Lord above all lords, would have his servants known by their liveries and badge, which badge is love alone. Whosoever now is indued with love and charity, is his servant; him we may call Christ's servant; for love is the token whereby you may know that such a servant pertaineth to Christ; so that charity may be called the very livery of Christ. He that hath charity is Christ's servant: he that hath not charity, is the servant of the devil. For as Christ's livery is love and charity, so the devil's livery is hatred, malice, and discord.

But I think the devil has a great many more servants than Christ has; for there are a great many more in his livery than in Christ's livery; there are but very few who are indued with Christ's livery; with love and charity, gentleness and meekness of spirit; but there are a great number that bear hatred and malice in their hearts, that are proud, stout and lofty; therefore the number of the devil's servants is greater than the number of Christ's servants.

Now St. Paul shows how needful this love is. I speak not of carnal love, which is only animal affection; but of this charitable love which is so necessary, that when a man hath it, without all other things it will suffice him. Again, if a man have all other things and lacketh that love, it will not help him, it is all vain and lost. St. Paul used it so: "Though I speak with tongues of men and angels, and yet had no love, I were even as sounding brass, or as a tinkling cymbal. And though I could prophesy and understand all secrets and all knowledge; yea, if I had all faith, so that I could move mountains out of their places, and yet had no love, I were nothing. And though I bestowed all my goods to feed the poor, and though I gave my body even that I were burned, and yet had no love, it profiteth me nothing." (1 Cor. xiii.) These are godly gifts, yet St. Paul calls them nothing when a man hath them without charity; which is a great commendation, and shows the great need of love, insomuch that all other virtues are in vain when this love is absent. And there have been some who thought that St. Paul spake against the dignity of faith; but you must understand that St. Paul speaks here not of the justi-

fying faith, wherewith we receive everlasting life, but he understands by this word faith, the gift to do miracles, to remove hills; of such a faith he speaks. This I say to confirm this proposition. Faith only justifieth: this proposition is most true and certain. And St. Paul speaks not here of this lively justifying faith; for this right faith is not without love, for love cometh and floweth out of faith, love is a child of faith; for no man can love except he believe, so that they have two several offices, they themselves being inseparable.

St. Paul has an expression in the thirteenth chapter of the first of the Corinthians, which according to the outward letter seems much to the dispraise of this faith, and to the praise of love; these are his words, "Now abideth faith, hope, and love, even these three; but the chiefest of these is love." There are some learned men, who expound the greatness of which St. Paul speaketh here, as if meant for eternity. For when we come to God, then we believe no more, but rather see with our eyes face to face how he is; yet for all that, love remains still; so that love may be called the chiefest, because she endureth for ever. And though she is the chiefest, yet we must not attribute unto her the office which pertains unto faith only. Like as I cannot say, the mayor of Stamford must make me a pair of shoes because he is a greater man than the shoemaker is; for the mayor, though he is the greater man, yet it is not his office to make shoes; so though love be greater, yet it is not her office to save. Thus much I thought good to say against those who fight against the truth.

Now, when we would know who are in Christ's livery or not, we must learn it of St. Paul, who most evidently described charity, which is the very livery, saying, "Love is patient, she suffereth long." Now whosoever fumeth and is angry, he is out of this livery: therefore let us remember that we do not cast away the livery of Christ our master. When we are in sickness or any manner of adversities, our duty is to be patient, to suffer willingly, and to call upon him for aid, help, and comfort; for without him we are not able to abide any tribulation. Therefore we must call upon God, he has promised to help: therefore let me not think him to be false or untrue in his promises, for we cannot dishonour God more than by not believing or trusting in him. Therefore let us beware above all things of dishonouring God; and so we must be patient, trusting and most certainly be-

lieving that he will deliver us when it seems good to him, who knows the time better than we ourselves.

"Charity is gentle, friendly, and loving; she envieth not." They that envy their neighbour's profit when it goes well with him, such fellows are out of their liveries, and so out of the service of God, for to be envious is to be the servant of the devil.

"Love doth not frowardly, she is not a provoker;" as there are some men who will provoke their neighbour so far that it is very hard for them to be in charity with them; but we must wrestle with our affections; we must strive and see that we keep this livery of Christ our master; for "the devil goeth about as a roaring lion seeking to take us at a vantage," to bring us out of our liveries, and to take from us the knot* of love and charity.

"Love swelleth not, is not puffed up;" but there are many swellers now-a-days, they are so high, so lofty, insomuch that they despise and contemn all others: all such persons are under the governance of the devil. God rules not them with his good Spirit, the evil spirit has occupied their hearts and possessed them.

"She doth not dishonestly; she seeketh not her own; she doth all things to the commodity of her neighbours." A charitable man will not promote himself with the damage of his neighbour. They that seek only their own advantage, forgetting their neighbours, they are not of God, they have not his livery. Further, "charity is not provoked to anger; she thinketh not evil." We ought not to think evil of our neighbour, as long as we see not open wickedness in him; for it is written, "You shall not judge;" we should not take upon us to condemn our neighbour. And surely the condemners of other men's works are not in the livery of Christ. Christ hateth them.

"She rejoiceth not in iniquity;" she loveth equity and godliness. And again, she is sorry to hear of falsehood, of stealing, or such like, which wickedness is now at this time commonly used. There never was such falsehood among Christian men as there is now, at this time; truly I think, and they that have experience report it so, that among the very Infidels and Turks there is more fidelity and uprightness than among Christian men. For no man setteth any thing by his promise, yea and writings will not serve with some, they are so shameless that they dare deny

* Or bond.

their own hand-writing: but, I pray you, are those false fellows in the livery of Christ? Have they his cognizance? No, no; they have the badge of the devil, with whom they shall be damned world without end, except they amend and leave their wickedness.

"She suffereth all things; she believeth all things." It is a great matter that should make us to be grieved with our neighbour; we should be patient when our neighbour doth wrong, we should admonish him of his folly, earnestly desiring him to leave his wickedness, showing the danger that follows, namely, everlasting damnation. In such wise we should study to amend our neighbour, and not to hate him or do him a foul turn again, but rather charitably study to amend him: whosoever now does so, he has the livery and cognizance of Christ, he shall be known at the last day for his servant.

"Love believeth all things:" it appears daily that they who are charitable and friendly are most deceived; because they think well of every man, they believe every man, they trust their words, and therefore are most deceived in this world, among the children of the devil. These and such like things are the tokens of the right and godly love: therefore they that have this love are soon known, for this love cannot be hid in corners, she has her operation:* therefore all that have her are well enough, though they have no other gifts besides her. Again, they that lack her, though they have many other gifts besides, yet is it to no other purpose, it does them no good: for when we shall come at the great day before him, not having this livery (that is, love) with us, then we are lost; he will not take us for his servants, because we have not his cognizance. But if we have this livery, if we wear his cognizance here in this world; that is, if we love our neighbour, help him in his distress, are charitable, loving, and friendly unto him, then we shall be known at the last day: but if we be uncharitable towards our neighbour, hate him, seek our own advantage with his damage, then we shall be rejected of Christ and so damned world without end.

Our Saviour saith here in this gospel, "I command you these things:" he speaketh in the plural number, and lappeth it up in one thing, which is, that we should love one another, much like St. Paul's saying in the thirteenth to the Romans, "Owe nothing to any man, but to love one

* Work.

another." Here St. Paul lappeth up all things together, signifying unto us, that love is the consummation of the law; for this commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," is contained in this law of love: for he that loveth God will not break wedlock, because wedlock breaking is a dishonouring of God and a serving of the devil. "Thou shalt not kill:" he that loveth will not kill, he will do no harm. "Thou shalt not steal;" he that loveth his neighbour as himself, will not take away his goods. I had of late occasion to speak of picking and stealing, where I showed unto you the danger wherein they are that steal their neighbours' goods from them, but I hear nothing yet of restitution. Sirs, I tell you, except restitution is made, look for no salvation. And it is a miserable and heinous thing to consider that we are so blinded with this world, that rather than we would make restitution, we will sell unto the devil our souls which are bought with the blood of our Saviour Christ. What can be done more to the dishonouring of Christ, than to cast our souls away to the devil for the value of a little money?—the soul which he has bought with his painful passion and death! But I tell you those that will do so, and that will not make restitution when they have done wrong, or have taken away their neighbour's goods, they are not in the livery of Christ, they are not his servants; let them go as they will in this world, yet for all that they are foul and filthy enough before God; they stink before his face; and therefore they shall be cast from his presence into everlasting fire: this shall be all their good cheer that they shall have, because they have not the livery of Christ, nor his cognizance, which is love. They remember not that Christ commanded us, saying, "This I command you, that ye love one another." This is Christ's commandment. Moses, the great prophet of God, gave many laws, but he gave not the Spirit to fulfil the same laws: but Christ gave this law, and promised unto us, that when we call upon him he will give us his Holy Ghost, who shall make us able to fulfil his laws, though not so perfectly as the law requires; but yet to the contentation of God, and to the protection of our faith: for as long as we are in this world, we can do nothing as we ought to do, because our flesh leadeth us, which is ever bent against the law of God; yet our works which we do are well taken for Christ's sake, and God will reward them in heaven.

Therefore our Saviour saith, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light," because he helpeth to bear them; else indeed we should not be able to bear them. And in another place he saith, "his commandments are not heavy;" they are heavy to our flesh, but, being qualified with the Spirit of God, to the faithful which believe in Christ, to them, I say, they are not heavy; for though their doings are not perfect, yet they are well taken for Christ's sake.

You must not be offended because the Scripture commends love so highly, for he that commends the daughter, commends the mother; for love is the daughter, and faith is the mother: love floweth out of faith; where faith is, there is love; but yet we must consider their offices, faith is the hand wherewith we take hold on everlasting life.

Now let us enter into ourselves, and examine our own hearts, whether we are in the livery of God, or not: and when we find ourselves to be out of this livery, let us repent and amend our lives, so that we may come again to the favour of God, and spend our time in this world to his honour and glory, forgiving our neighbours all such things as they have done against us.

And now to make an end: mark here who gave this precept of love—Christ our Saviour himself. When and at what time? At his departing, when he should suffer death. Therefore these words ought the more to be regarded, seeing he himself spake them at his last departing from us. May God of his mercy give us grace so to walk here in this world, charitably and friendly one with another, that we may attain the joy which God hath prepared for all those that love him. *Amen.*

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST.

A SERMON,

Preached on Christmas Day, 1552.

LUKE ii.

And she brought forth her first-begotten son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were in the same region shepherds abiding in the field, watching their flock by night, &c.

THIS gospel makes special mention of the nativity of our Saviour Jesus Christ, declaring, how Mary, with her husband Joseph, came according to the commandment of the emperor, from Nazareth unto Bethlehem, the city of David, of whose lineage and tribe she was. What miseries and calamities she suffered by the way, and how poor and miserable she was, having nothing that pertained to a woman in her case, you may well consider; and concerning his nativity, his poverty, how he was born in a stable among beasts, lacking all manner of necessary things which appertain to young children. Wherefore Mary his mother laid him in a manger, where he was shown, not to the rulers of this world, nor to kings, potentates, or bishops; but to simple shepherds, and poor servants keeping their sheep in the field. To these poor men the angel of God was sent who proclaimed these great things unto them; saying, "Be not afraid, for behold I bring you tidings of great gladness that shall come to all people: for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord," &c.

This is the greatest comfort in the world, to know that our Saviour is born, that he is abroad, and at hand to every one that calleth upon him. What greater gladness

can there be unto a man who feels his sin, and sees his damnation before his eyes; unto such a man nothing is more acceptable than to hear that there is a Saviour who will help him and heal his sores. Therefore this message of the angel was very joyful tidings.

The angel bade them go unto Bethlehem and search for the child: and forthwith a great many angels came together rejoicing, singing, and praising God for our sakes, that the Redeemer of mankind was born into the world. For without him nothing avails in the sight of God the Father; without him no man can praise God, because it has pleased God for his Son's sake only, to show himself favourable and loving unto mankind, and only to receive that prayer which is made unto him in the name of Christ our Saviour. Therefore all those who come before God without him, shall be rejected as persons rebellious against God and his constitutions. For the will, pleasure, and counsel of God is, only to receive those who come to him in the name of his Son our Saviour, who know themselves, lament their own sins, and confess their own naughtiness and wickedness, and put their whole trust and confidence only in the Son of God, the Redeemer of mankind, as the angels themselves testify.

Here, in this gospel, note, that there was singing and rejoicing, for the great and unspeakable goodness and mercy of Almighty God the Father, whom it pleased to redeem mankind through the death of his only, true, and most dearly beloved Son our Saviour and Redeemer, Jesus Christ, very God and very man; the Son of God after his Godhead, the son of Mary after his manhood, which he hath taken upon him for man's sake, to redeem and deliver the same from all misery, and to set him at unity with God the Father, and finally to bring him to everlasting life.

Now it follows in the text, "As soon as the angels were gone from them," &c. Mark here, that the angels as soon as they had done their business, returned unto their Master who had sent them. By which all good and godly servants may learn, that whenever their masters send them on their business, they ought to do the same diligently, and quickly to return again to their masters; not spending the time in loitering and evil practices, as the common sort of servants do in these days; quite contrary to the example of these angels of God, who returned to him immediately after their message was done. And would to God that all servants

would consider this, and keep in remembrance these angels of God: for if this were well considered, there would not be such great complaints of the bad conduct of servants as there is every where; God amend it.

We read here that the angels appeared visibly and in sight; by which we shall consider, that whensoever or wheresoever the word of God is preached, there the angels are present, who keep in safe custody all those who receive the word of God, and study to live after it: for St. Paul calleth them, "The administrators and servants of the Spirit." (Heb. i.) Therefore seeing the angels are present, it is meet for us to come with great reverence to the word of God, where himself with his angels are present.

"The angels return to heaven." Here I will not dispute before you, where heaven is, nor how many heavens there are. Such obscure questions appertain not to you that are unlearned. For this is sufficient for you to know, that wherever God exhibits and shows himself, there is heaven. God is every where, as he saith, "I fill heaven and earth;" but wherever he most apparently exhibits himself to his saints and angels, the same properly is called heaven, and thither these angels went after they had done their message, to wait upon the Lord, ready to go and do all that he would command them. Wherein you may learn the great love and kindness of God the heavenly Father, who made and created them for our sakes, that they should defend and keep us from our strong and mighty enemy the prince of this world, the devil, whose power passes all man's power: insomuch that except God preserved us from him by the ministration of his obedient angels, we should all perish, both soul and body. But thanks be unto God who never ceases to provide for us, to preserve both our souls and bodies. But mark here, that we are not bound to call upon the angels when we hear that they serve us; but rather to give God thanks in them that he hath vouchsafed to set such watchmen about us. Therefore learn to hope and trust in the Lord only, and give laud and thanks unto him, like as the angels themselves do, singing with loud and pleasant voice, as Luke saith.

This is enough of the angels. Now let us come to the shepherds. "The shepherds said one to another, Let us go unto Bethlehem, and see these things which we hear say have happened, that the Lord hath showed unto us." Here note the faith of these poor shepherds, who believed

the saying of the angels so steadfastly, that they were ready to go and do according to the commandment of the angels. They did not as many of us do, who are so slothful that we will scarcely abide one hour to hear the word of God. And when we have heard the same, we believe it not, we regard it not, it goes in at one ear and out at the other. Wherefore it is not to be wondered at that God is angry with us, seeing we are so forgetful and unthankful for his exceeding great benefits showed unto us in these latter days of the world.

This is a comfortable place for servants, who should be more diligent in their business than they are, considering that God regards them so much, that he is content to open his great and high mysteries unto servants first, setting aside all kings and rulers in this world, who alone are esteemed in the sight of men. Here therefore learn, O ye servants, and consider that God regards you no less than the greatest lords in the world, if you live according to his commandment, which is, that you shall serve your masters truly and uprightly, and not with a feigned heart.

"Let us go to Bethlehem," said the shepherds. Here is to be noted in these shepherds a great charity* among themselves, in that one exhorts another to go to follow the word of God. Many folks now-a-days agree and exhort each other to do wickedly, to steal, to pick, and to do all evil: but they will not agree to exhort their neighbours to do any goodness as these shepherds did. Therefore let us not be ashamed to learn of these poor shepherds, to follow their examples. When we hear the word of God let us exhort one another to follow the same, and let us agree in goodness, to seek Christ and to follow him according to his word, and then we shall find him. Let the curate exhort his parishioners to follow the commandments of God: let the householder exhort his wife, children, servants, and family to seek Christ; let every neighbour exhort another to goodness, yea, let every one consider that no one person is born into the world for his own sake, but for the commonwealth sake. Let us therefore walk charitably, not seeking our own commodities, but the honour and glory of God, and the wealth† of all Christians, with exhortations, admonitions, and prayers one for another, that the name of God may be magnified among us, and his will known and fulfilled. Of these poor shepherds we may learn much

* Love. † Welfare.

goodness, yea, the best doctor of divinity need not be ashamed to learn of them, and to follow their examples, who are now saints in heaven, and the inheritors of everlasting life.

But yet we must beware that we go not too far. For we may not make gods of them, nor call upon them, as we have been taught in times past, because God will be called upon, honoured, and worshipped alone: he will not suffer any to be fellow with him: as he himself saith, "I give mine honour to none." (Is. xlii.) Therefore we must call upon him only, and seek all manner of comfort at his hand, who is the fountain of all goodness, and not from saints. But if you will needs worship them, will you hear how you shall worship them? Live godly and uprightly after their example, follow their charitable life and steadfast faith, then you worship them as they ought to be worshipped. But to call upon them is not a worship, but a detestable idolatry; because, as I said before, we must call upon God only, and not upon saints. For when we call upon them, we make them gods, and then we put God out of his seat, and place them in it; which manner of doing God cannot suffer unpunished, and therefore beware.

Further, we learn in this gospel the nature of very true and unfeigned faith. These shepherds, as soon as the angels were gone from them, consulted what was to be done: and at length with one consent concluded to forsake and set aside their flocks of sheep and cattle, and to go unto Bethlehem to seek the Saviour. Here appeareth their excellent, marvellous, and great faith; for they were in peril of body and goods. To leave a flock of sheep a whole night without a shepherd, could not be done without great danger, for that country brought forth many wild and harmful beasts; ready to devour the whole flock of sheep in one night. As we read of a lion that killed a prophet, but not without the sufferance of God: also of the lion which Samson killed, when he went to see his new married wife; also we read in the Scripture, of two bears that killed at one time forty-two children that mocked the prophet Elisha. So that it appears partly by the Holy Scripture, and partly by other writers, as Josephus, that the same country is full of such devouring beasts. Therefore to leave a flock of sheep without a shepherd was a great matter for them to do who were but servants,

and were bound to make amends for all that should happen to be lost; as we read of Jacob, who always made good out of his own flock unto Laban his father-in-law when any thing had been lost. So it appears that these shepherds were in peril of body and goods; for if they had not been able to make amends, then they themselves should have been sold to perpetual slavery and bondage, like horses or brute beasts. But faith, when it is not feigned, feareth no peril nor danger; a faithful man knows that God is able to defend him, and to help him in all tribulation. And here is verified the saying of our Saviour Christ, that "whosoever shall lose his life, shall find it." (Mat. xvi.) These shepherds put their lives in adventure, yea, they put themselves in the greatest peril that might be: but at length they found the Saviour, who restored to them their souls, and bodies, and everlasting life. Here we may learn to be hearty, and to do manfully for the gospel's sake, believing undoubtedly that God is able and will preserve us in the midst of all our tribulations, so that we do that which it is our duty to do; that is, to live and die in God's cause, and so to forsake ourselves, that we may find him who will give us life everlasting.

Further, here all those may be ashamed who set so much by this world, that they cannot find in their hearts to forego one farthing for God's sake. Such shall receive their judgment from these shepherds who were so hearty in God's cause, and not without peril of their lives. Therefore return, Oh thou covetous heart, return to God, amend thy life—consider the momentary and short time that thou hast to live here, and that when thou shalt depart hence, thou must be judged after thine own wickedness. And the more careful thou art to keep thy money and substance, the sooner shalt thou lose both that and thy soul also, which is the greatest treasure above all other.

"They came with haste unto Bethlehem." Here let every man learn to go quickly about his business to which God has appointed him; and especially servants may learn here to do their business truly and speedily, not spending the time in vain, going up and down when their masters are absent; but rather to be diligent, knowing that they serve not only their bodily master, but Christ himself, as St. Paul saith: therefore consider this, O ye servants, and know that God will reward you for your well doing, and again punish you for your slothfulness and deceitful doings.

"They found Mary and Joseph, and the babe laid in a manger, according to the saying of the angel." Here let every man follow the example of the angel, who told the shepherds no lies: so let every man be upright in his talk, and talk nothing abroad, except he be sure that it is so. For when you do otherwise, you follow not this angel. Make no manner of promise, neither great nor small, except you are able to keep it. Above all things beware of perjury and lies, which are abominable in the sight of God, as his word saith, "Thou hatest those, O God, that speak lies with their tongue." But God knoweth that many things are now promised, and nothing performed. Every man is more liberal in speech than in deed; whereas it should be the contrary. Likewise servants are not angels when they deal deceitfully with their masters, and when they are slothful in their doings, not regarding their promise made unto their masters. For they promise to serve diligently in all manner of business, which God knoweth is not kept by a great many servants: yea, there are none that serve as they ought to do, therefore all such are not as angels.

"The same Mary, Joseph, and the babe." Here we may not take heed of the order of this speech or writing; as—Mary is set before her child, therefore she hath more authority than her child hath. Thus the bishop of Rome makes an argument, saying, Peter is ever first named before the apostles, therefore he is the principal and chief apostle, and all the others are subjects unto him. Which manner of reasoning is false. For after that reasoning, Mary should be more esteemed than our Saviour, which were abominable and quite against the verity of the Scripture: and therefore the setting and placing of names in Scripture is not to be observed, nor any arguments made after that manner, as to which is set first or last.

"They find Mary and Joseph; and the child lying in a manger." Here is the faith of the shepherds proved. They had heard a voice from heaven which promised unto them a Saviour, and now when they come, they find nothing but a poor infant lying in a manger. This was a great matter to them, for they thought they should have found him keeping a state after his name, that is, like a Saviour; but they found a poor child, who according to man's reason was not able to help himself: notwithstanding, they had conceived a strong and hearty faith, and that faith preserved them from all such outward storms and offences.

By which we may learn of these shepherds not to be offended with the poor kingdom that our Saviour kept in this world: for we see most commonly that the rich and wealthy of this world despise and condemn the word of God. Let us therefore be despised in this world with Christ our king, that we may have with him everlasting life hereafter, when the proud and sturdy fellows shall be thrust into everlasting fire. For these shepherds were not offended with the poverty of our Saviour, and therefore stayed and meddled no further, but they went forth and preached and talked of it to other folks; which they could not do without peril of their lives. For the Pharisees and the spiritualty were so stubborn that they would suffer no other doctrine to be taught than their own fantasies: as it appeared afterwards when they killed Christ himself, and after him a great number of the apostles: yet for all that these poor shepherds were content to lose their lives in God's quarrel. Therefore they go and teach their neighbours and others how the Messias and Saviour of the world was born of a virgin, and how the angel of God had opened it unto them.

But what followed from their teaching, or what became of it? It begot a wondering and a gazing: every body marvelled at it, and was desirous to talk of it, because it was a new matter; as we see in this our time, a great number of people pretend the gospel, and bear the name of gospellers, because it is a new thing, and therefore it is the more pleasant unto them. So was it at that time, every body would talk of it in all places, but there were few or none that believed. For we read not that any of them went forth to seek the child, and so to confirm his or their faith; no, there were none. It was but a talk, and so they used it: wherein you may note the unfaithfulness and unthankfulness of this world, which will not receive the great benefits of God, offered unto us. The shepherds told them how the angel of God had opened the matter to them, but the foolish people would not believe it. And even so at this time the preachers go abroad and show unto the people what God hath done for them, how he hath delivered them from sin, death, and hell. But the people are so blinded with unthankfulness, that they will not believe the benefits of God, nor receive them, but make a gazing and a wondering at the matter.

But what did Mary the mother of Christ? What did she? The evangelist saith, "she pondered it in her heart," she

weighed the matter with herself. She did not as our well-spoken dames do; she took not in hand to preach: she knew that silence in a woman is a great virtue, therefore she made nothing of the matter. She boasted not of her stock, that she was of the lineage of noble king David; neither did she praise her own child, but would rather hear him praised of another; she tarried until the Lord himself had opened the matter: neither would she be too hasty in promoting herself to honour.

Here all women may learn to follow the example of Mary, to leave their talk and vain speaking, and to keep silence. For what was the cause of the fall of mankind, but the unmeasurable talk of Eve, who took in hand to reason the matter with the serpent—she thought herself very learned, and able to convince him! So there are too many now who take too much upon them. Such women may learn here of Mary to keep their tongues in better order. All women commonly make much of the mother of Christ, yea, some call upon her: but for all that they will not follow her example and goodness.

Further, here is to be noted, the temptation and trial wherewith Mary was tempted and tried. She heard of the angel that she should bring forth a Saviour, whose kingdom should last for ever. And now that he is born, nobody comes to visit him but poor shepherds; which seemed strange unto her, and such as might make her much to marvel at the matter, and overthrow her faith. But Mary comforted herself with the word and promise of God, which was that her son should reign for ever. This she believed, and therefore took no harm of the said temptation or trial, but rather much good; for this visitation of the shepherds was an establishment of her faith, and a great increase of the same. And here is verified the saying of St. Paul, "All things work for the best to them that love God." (Rom. viii.)

Further, by these shepherds we learn, that God is not partial, he hath not respect to any person, neither to the rich, wise, nor mighty; but he delighteth in those that are meek and lowly in spirit, unto such God openeth himself; as Christ saith, "I thank thee heavenly Father, that thou hast hidden these things from the wise men of this world, and hast opened them unto the simple." (Matt. xi.) Which saying of Christ is verified now upon us; for God hath hidden the divine mysteries of his word from the pope, cardi-

nals, bishops, and the great learned men of this world, and hath opened it unto us; therefore let us be thankful for his innumerable benefits poured upon us so richly and abundantly. Let us follow therefore the example of these shepherds. Let us come to Bethlehem, that is to Christ, with an earnest mind, and hearty zeal to hear the word of God, and then follow it indeed; for not the hearer shall be saved, but the doer and follower thereof; (James i.) as Christ saith, "Not those that call me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of God, but those which do the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. vii.) Wherefore let us follow the word of God, let us glorify and magnify his holy name in all our works and conversations, wherein consist the very thankfulness and true service which we owe unto him.

"And the shepherds returned, lauding and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen." They were not professed religious men, nor monks, but returned again to their business, and to their occupation: where we learn that every man should follow his occupation and vocation, and not leave the same, except God call him from it to another; for God would have every man to live in that order which he has ordained for him. And no doubt the man that plieth his occupation truly, without any fraud or deceit, the same is acceptable to God, and he shall have everlasting life. . . .

Here I might take occasion to speak of all estates, and what pertaineth to every one of them, but the time is past; I will therefore make an end, without any rehearsal or recital of that which is already said. The Lord of heaven and earth make us diligent and ready to do his will, and live after his commandment, and so come finally to everlasting life through Christ our Lord: to whom, with God the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, for ever and ever, world without end. Amen, Amen.

THE BIRTH OF CHRIST

A SERMON,

Preached upon St. Stephen's Day, being the day after Christmas Day, 1552.

LUKE ii.

And it fortuned that while they were there, her time was come that she should be delivered, and she brought forth her first-begotten son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

I SHOWED you yesterday, right worshipful audience, what was the occasion that Mary, the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ our only Saviour and Redeemer, came to Bethlehem, where it was prophesied that he should be born. The occasion was this. Octavius was emperor over the great empire of Rome at the time when Christ should be born, (as it was prophesied he should be born while the second temple stood.) Now this Octavius sent out a general proclamation, that all countries under his dominion should be taxed, and give him a certain sum of money.

Now God intended another thing. Octavius with this proclamation sought nothing but to fill his purse, and to make money, but God sought occasion that way to fulfil his prophesy: for it was prophesied a long time before that Christ should be born at Bethlehem. Now Mary could not come thither except by some occasion, and therefore this was the occasion, namely, that she should come and be taxed, and pay a certain sum of money to the officers. And here we shall consider and weigh the obedience that Mary the mother of Christ and her husband showed towards the magistrates, that she was content to take such a great journey in hand with her husband Joseph,

to show herself obedient unto the magistrates. And here I took occasion to speak somewhat of obedience, how we ought to show ourselves obedient in all things which are not against God. I think we cannot speak too much of this matter, for it is a thing most necessary to be known. For if the parents of our Saviour were content to be obedient to a heathen king, how much more should we show ourselves obedient unto our natural king, who feedeth us with the holy word of God, and seeks not only our bodily health and wealth, but also the health of our souls? How much more ought we to reverence him and honour him, who rules over us, not tyrannously, as Octavius did over the Jews, but most lovingly governs us, seeking not his own advantage but our good?

Now by this occasion, as I told you, namely, to show themselves obedient, Joseph and Mary came unto Bethlehem, a long journey, and poor folks, and peradventure on foot: for we read of no great horses that she had, as our great ladies have now-a-days. Now he that would show the good behaviour that was between them two, must surely have much time. We read of no falling out between them, or any ill behaviour on either side. Wherefore all husbands may learn by Joseph, to do their duties toward their wives, and again all wives may learn by her.

Well, she was great with child, and was now come to Bethlehem. It is wonderful to consider the works of God. The emperor Octavius served God's purpose, and yet knew nothing of him; for he knew not what manner of man was to be born, at the time when his proclamation was sent out. But John Baptist, who went before our Saviour Christ, showed what manner of man Christ was, when he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world." John i.

By these words is showed to what end Christ was sent into the world, namely, to take away sins. And before this, Zachary, the father of John Baptist, brake forth into praising of God, saying, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up a horn of salvation." Now if Zachary rejoiced in God because of the birth of John, how much more should we laud and praise God, that Christ our Saviour himself is born! for John Baptist was the precursor. He was but a servant of God; yet Zachary his father so much rejoiced in him. How much, I say, shall we praise

God, that the Lord above all lords has taken upon him our humanity,* and is made man, for this great benefit; that he would vouchsafe to humble himself so much, as to take our nature upon him, for this cause, to deliver us out of the hands of the old serpent the devil, in whose kingdom and dominion all mankind should have been, if this Saviour had not come into the world.

And thus his first coming was but in a very poor manner, without any jollity or pomp; but his second coming, as I have told you many a time before, shall be a glorious coming, a beautiful coming; for he shall come accompanied with all his angels. He shall come with such clearness, that the sun and the moon shall be darkened at his coming, not that the sun itself of his substance shall be darkened, no not so; for it shall give his light, but it shall not be seen for this great light and clearness, wherein our Saviour shall appear. Now at the first he is come, not with glory or majesty, but with great poverty and misery, which he has sustained for our sakes.

We have here to consider the great benefits of God the almighty Father, that it hath pleased him through his great goodness and love which he bare towards us who were his enemies, that it hath pleased him, I say, to give unto us for our sakes his only Son into these miseries and calamities, and to suffer him to take our nature upon him, and to deliver us by his most painful and grievous passion. We cannot express the worthiness of it, but though we are not able to express it, yet we must do as much as we can.

Now to come to the knowledge of this benefit, you must consider first, what he was before he was incarnate and made man: for when we know what he was before he was made man, then we shall know what he hath done for us.

Now therefore you must know, that he was the Son of God, yea God himself, the Lord and King over heaven and earth, through whom all things were made and created, and by whom all things are kept and sustained, ruled and governed;—that same God, that same Son of God, refused not to humble himself far beyond all measure, to take upon him such a vile nature, for he was made very man.

You must not think as the Arians did, who said that he

* Human nature.

was not a very man, nor suffered very pains upon the cross, but had a fantastical body.* And I know where there was one of such an erroneous opinion, not many years since; he belonged to a great man at that time. Beware therefore of this opinion, and believe steadfastly that he was a very natural man,† sin excepted. Again, we must believe that he was God's Son, not by adoption, as we are, for we all are adopted and taken for the children of God. But he was before the world began with God—the Son of God, and God himself, . . . I will prove him to be very God, because we are commanded to call upon him. Now you know that to call upon God, is to honour God; and God saith in his word that he will give his honour to nobody; but Christ hath the honour of God, therefore he must needs be very God. And here we have occasion to be sorry that we have called upon saints, and so have deprived God of his honour and dignity, and made them tutelary gods. But Christ is he on whom we must call, and put our confidence in: for it is written, "All the kings of the world shall honour him, and call upon his name." And therefore here it appears most manifestly that he is very God, coequal with the Father after his divinity.

You have heard this day in the service of St. Stephen, how he called upon Christ, saying, "Lord Jesus, take thou my spirit:" (Acts v.) lifting up his eyes unto heaven, signifying that Christ is very God; which, no doubt, St. Stephen would not have done, if Christ had not been very God.

Now this day is St. Stephen's day, who was put to death because he rebuked the stubbornness of the wicked priests and bishops, which bishops stirred up false witness against him, and so stoned him, but it is well for him that ever he was born.

Now therefore if you will worship St. Stephen, I will tell you how you should worship him. Consider his faith and the heartiness which he had in God's cause: and pray unto God that you may have such a strong faith as he had, that you may be ready to forsake the world, and suffer for the word of God, like as he hath done. Also further pray unto God, that you may have such a strong faith to pray unto him, as St. Stephen had. This is the

* A mere outward appearance of man.
† A real man. Heb. iv. 15.

right worshipping of St. Stephen—to follow his example, but not to call upon him.

But I marvel much how it came to pass that upon this day we were wont to let our horses blood:* it is like as though St. Stephen had some great government over the horses, which no doubt is a vain invention of man. We ought to commit ourselves, and all that we have, unto the governance of God, and not to be so foolish as to commit them unto saints. God grant us that we may say with a good faith from the bottom of our hearts, "Lord Jesus, receive our spirits." Further, Christ himself showed most manifestly what he was, for he hath witnesses enough; the Father, the Holy Ghost, John Baptist, and the works which he did: and finally he himself witnesses what he is, for he saith, "He that believeth in me, hath everlasting life." Here is plainly showed by his own words what he was, namely, the Redeemer of mankind, and very God; for nobody can give everlasting life save only God. But Christ giveth everlasting life, *ergo*, he is very natural God. And in another place he saith, "Like as the Father raiseth up the dead, so doth the Son too:" where it most manifestly appears, that he is equal unto the Father; they work their works together inseparably. This I tell you, that you should consider with yourselves what Christ was before he took our nature upon him; and again, consider what he hath done for us, and how exceedingly he hath humbled himself.

Now I will show you what man is of his own nature when left unto himself; but I will not speak of that singular† Son of man, which was Christ, for he had two natures in unity of person. He was very God and very man, he was a privileged man from all other men; that man never sinned, therefore I speak not of him, but of the nature which mankind inherited of Adam after he had sinned; for as he was, that is, a sinful wicked man, disobedient unto the word of God, such he brought into the world. Now what is man, what is the nature of the son of Adam? I speak not of Christ, for he was not born of the seed of Adam. When we know what man is, then we shall perceive what great benefit we have received of God the Father Almighty, in that he hath sent his only Son to be a sacrifice for us, and to help us out of

* A popish custom. The horses are now blessed and sprinkled with holy water at Rome on St. Anthony's day.

† To whom no one can be compared.

the state of damnation, and to remedy this impurity of our nature.

Now this our nature, David, the holy king and prophet describes with few words, saying, "Lo, in iniquity am I born, and in sin hath my mother conceived me." (Ps. li.) Which words are not so to be understood, as though the lawful use of matrimony were unclean before God, for it hath his warrant in Scripture, in God's book. He speaks not here of the company that is between man and wife, but he signifies by his words what he had inherited of his parents, of Adam, namely, sin and wickedness: and he speaks not of himself only but of all mankind: he paints us out in our own colours; showing that we all are contaminated from our birth with sin, and so should justly be fire-brands in hell, world without end. This the holy prophet showed in these words, to put us in remembrance of our own wretchedness, to teach us to despair of our own holiness and righteousness, and to seek our help and comfort by that Messias whom God hath promised to our forefathers, and now hath fulfilled the same promise.

Another Scripture signifies unto us further what we are of ourselves, of our own nature, for it is written, "Every man is a liar;" therefore man is not clean, but full of falsehood and deceit, and all manner of sin and wickedness, yea we may learn what we are of our own nature, namely, poisoned and corrupt with all manner of uncleanness. Another Scripture we have, which saith to this purpose, "The Lord looked down from heaven, to see if there were any man that did well; but they were all declined, they were all naught together." (Psalm xiv.) God looked down to consider whether there were some that had understanding of him or not. What brought he to pass? what found he when he made inquisition? He found this, "All men have declined from God, there was not one that did good, no not one." Here we may perceive what we are of ourselves, of our own nature. And again, here we may see what Christ the Son of God hath done for us: what inestimable benefits we have received at his hands, namely, to suffer for us and to cleanse us from all our sins and wickedness, to make us just before the face of God, to purge us from all iniquity, as well from original sin as actual: for if he had not done so, we should never have been able to escape the wrath of God: for "Whatsoever

is born of flesh is flesh;" that is to say, is sinful, wicked, and therefore destitute of the glory of God, and is the child of the devil;—if Christ had not come and cleansed our filthiness, if he had not suffered death for us, we had perished. Now before he suffered, he was born and lived a great while in this miserable world, for he could not have suffered if he had not been born, for no man can suffer before he is alive. Further it is written in God's book, " God hath concluded all mankind under sin;" (Gal. iii.) so that all mankind was sinful and destitute of the favour of God, save only Christ.

Wherefore, I pray you, have I rehearsed all these Scriptures? Truly, to this intent, to bring you to know how great need we have of Christ: for no doubt if we had not had him, all mankind would have been damned, yea the best of us, world without end. But that we have deliverance, that the kingdom of heaven is opened unto us, he brought to pass with his passion; for he took upon him our nature, and so deserved everlasting life for us: for by him we have it, and therefore we must thank him for it, we must give to him all honour and praise.

There is a great unity between the two natures in Christ, between the manhood and Godhead; for the body and the soul make a man, but the manhood and the Godhead are joined so together, that they make but one Christ; and yet they are not confounded, so that the Godhead is not turned into the manhood, neither the manhood into the Godhead. And thus Christ, who was very God and very man, died not for himself nor of necessity, for death had no right unto him, because he was without sin, but he died for our sakes, willingly, without any compulsion, moved by the great love that he bare unto man: and therefore he saith, " No man taketh away my life, but I myself put it away; but I will receive it again: (John x.) I am willing to die, for by my death I will destroy the kingdom of the devil; and by my death all mankind shall be saved." And here he himself showed what he was, namely, very God; for he had power over death, and not death over him: and so he died not by compulsion, but willingly; for it was his will and pleasure to help us, and deliver us from our wretchedness; for nothing else could help us, but the death of the eternal Son of God.

And here you may note by the way, what a heinous thing sin is before the face of God, how he abhorreth sin,

that he would be reconciled with nothing save only with the death of his Son our Saviour Jesus Christ. And this should make us to hate sin, and not to fall willingly and wittingly into any kind of sin again, but rather to live uprightly and godly, according unto his will and commandment: seeing that he bears such a loving and fatherly heart towards us, that he spared not his only Son, but gave him even to the most vile and painful death for our sakes—for the sake of our sins and wickedness.

David, that holy man, when he considered this great benefit, what saith he? He fell into these words, "What shall I give unto the Lord for all those things which he hath given unto me?" Then he makes answer to himself, and saith, "I will call upon the name of the Lord: I will take the cup of health;" (Psal. cxvi.) that is to say, I will bear the cross that he shall lay upon me, willingly, without any grudging. Now therefore let us say so too; "O Lord, what shall we give unto thee again? what amends shall we make thee, seeing thou hast given us thine only begotten Son, who took upon him our vile nature, and suffered most painful death? For that we have a brother in heaven, what shall we now do? How shall we show ourselves thankful?" Verily, "We will call upon the name of the Lord:" we will praise him for all his goodness, we will show ourselves thankful with a godly, upright conversation. "We will take the cup of health;" we will bear all calamities and crosses that thou shalt lay upon us, willingly, without any grudging. This is all that we can do, and when the devil comes and tempts us, as no doubt he will not sleep, we shall defy him, knowing that we have a brother in heaven who hath overcome him and all his power: therefore we shall not need to fear him, or care for him, though he be busy with us, and tempt us in all manner of things to bring us to destruction. Let us defy him, and give God thanks who so mercifully hath dealt with us, and delivered us from all our sins. Let us take the cross meekly, whatsoever it be; though it be in misery or poverty, or other calamities. Let us be content withal, for they are but examinations and proofs, to provoke us to call upon God, when we feel the burden, and no doubt we shall be heard when we call as we ought to do, that is to say, with a faithful heart; then no doubt he will take them away, so that we shall be no more troubled with them, or else he will mitigate and as-

suage them in such sort, that we shall be able to bear the burden of them.

"And she brought forth her first begotten Son." . . . . . They came to Bethlehem, where they could not get a lodging in any inn, and so were compelled to lie in a stable, and there Mary the mother of Christ brought forth that blessed child, through whom, and in whom, all the nations of the earth are and shall be blessed; and there "she wrapped him in swaddling-clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." Here began the misery of the Lord more than all other lords, even at his first coming into this world, when he was laid in a manger: as soon as he was born, he began to taste poverty and miseries, to make amends for our sins and wickedness, and so to take away from us the wrath of God our heavenly Father, which lay upon all mankind so heavy, that we should all have been condemned world without end, if this child had not been born into this world.

And here we may learn by his poverty to comfort ourselves when God sends poverty unto us, and not to think because we are poor, therefore God hates us, or will condemn us; but rather consider with ourselves, and call to remembrance the poverty of Christ our Saviour. He was the beloved Son of God, and God himself, and yet he was content to be born in misery, and to sustain most vile poverty, and penury of all manner of those things which are required necessarily to the sustentation of this life. There are some who when they are in trouble say, "Oh, if God loved me, he would not punish me so, he would not suffer me to be vexed so grievously with poverty, and lack of necessaries!" which indeed is not so, for whom God loveth he correcteth. Examples we have in David, what troubles, calamities, and miseries he had, and yet God loved him, insomuch that he called him a man after his heart's desire: but though he was well-beloved of God, yet he must taste of miseries and calamities, of which he had not a little; but he ever clave unto God, who delivered him out of all his trouble.

Now some will say when they hear what poverty our Saviour suffered, and how Mary his mother was compelled to take a stable for lack of a better lodging, "O what a wicked city was this! What a company of cruel people were these!" But when we consider all things well, we

shall find that we are even as wicked as they were. For are not we given now-a-days to covetousness, so that we regard not the poor, needy, and miserable people? Seek we not our own advantage, and despise and neglect the poor? Therefore if you will cry out upon the Bethlehemites, then cry out on yourself, for you are as wicked, yea more wicked than they were. For the most part of all Bethlehem knew nothing of our Saviour Christ that he was born; but we know it, therefore we are inexcusable. God has sent unto us his preachers, who teach us the way to heaven: they show us wherein standeth our redemption, they exhort us to godliness, to do good works, to be pitiful, and liberal unto the poor, to help them, and comfort them: but what do we? Verily, we despise the preachers, we abhor their doctrine, and so consequently refuse Christ himself; for he saith, "He that receiveth you, receiveth me." (Matt. x.) This Christ speaketh by his preachers: therefore, as I said before, we need not to cry out against Bethlehem, but let us cry out on ourselves, for we are as ill in all points as they were.

But I warrant you, there was many a jolly damsel at that time in Bethlehem, yet amongst them all there was no one found that would humble herself so much, as once to go see poor Mary in the stable, and to comfort her. No, no; they were too fine to take so much pains. I warrant you they had their bracelets, and vardingals,* and were trimmed with all manner of fine and costly raiment, like as there are many now-a-days amongst us, who study nothing else but how they may devise fine raiment; and in the mean season, they suffer poor Mary to lie in the stable; that is to say, they suffer the poor people of God to perish for lack of necessaries.

But what was her swaddling clothes wherein she laid the King of heaven and earth? no doubt it was poor stuff, peradventure it was her kerchief which she took from her head, or such like gear, for I think Mary had not much fine linen, she was not trimmed up as our women are now-a-days. I think indeed Mary had never a vardingal, for she used no such superfluities as our fine damsels do now-a-days: for in the old time women were content with

* Or farthingale, a hoop petticoat; these were often of a very large size, and were worn as full dress till nearly the close of the eighteenth century.

honest and single garments. Now they have found out these round-abouts, they were not invented then, the devil was not so cunning as to make such then, he found it out afterward. Therefore Mary had it not. I will say this, and yet I judge not other folks' hearts, but only speak after daily appearance and experience; no doubt it is a token of pride to wear such vardingals, and therefore I think that every godly woman should set them aside. It was not for nought that St. Paul bade all women to give a good example of sadness, soberness, and godliness, in setting aside all wantonness and pride. And he speaks of such manner of pride as was used in his time: not with laying out the hair artificially: not with laying out the tussocks.* (1 Tim. ii.) I doubt not but if vardingals had been used in that time, St. Paul would have spoken against them too, like as he spake against other things which women used at that time to show their wantonness and foolishness. Therefore, as I said before, seeing that God abhorreth all pride, and vardingals are nothing else but an instrument of pride, I would wish that every woman would follow the counsel of St. Paul, and set aside such gorgeous apparel, and rather study to please God, than to set their minds upon pride: or else, when they will not follow the counsel of St. Paul, let them scrape out those words wherewith he forbiddeth their pride, otherwise the words of St. Paul will condemn them at the last day. I say no more, wise folks will do wisely, the words of St. Paul are not written for nothing; if they will do after his mind, they must set aside their foolish vardingals: but if they will go forward in their foolishness and pride, the reward which they shall have at the end, shall not be taken from them.

Here is a question to be moved, Who waited upon her? It is like that Joseph himself did so, for, as I told you before, those fine damsels thought great scorn to do any such thing for Mary; notwithstanding that she had brought into the world the Lord over heaven and earth.

And shall we murmur and grudge against God when we are in distress or poverty? Shall we cry out against him, seeing that Christ the Saviour of the world himself was handled so extremely? Therefore let us learn to be patient in all our troubles, let us be content with all that God shall

* Large bunches of hair plaited and twisted on the crown of the head.

send us: if we do so, he will plenteously reward us in everlasting life.

This day on which our Saviour was come into the world, we were made one flesh with the Son of God. O what a great honour is this unto us! which honour exceedeth the dignity of the angels. For though the angels are better in substance, yet we are better in the benefit; for Christ took not upon him the nature of angels, but he took our nature upon him, man's nature, I say. Oh what an exceeding thing is this! Oh how much are we bound to give him thanks for these his profound and inestimable benefits! We read a story, take it as you will, though it is not a true story:* The devil came once into a church while the priest was saying mass, and when he was at these words, "Et homo factus est, He was made man," the devil looked about him, and seeing no man kneel down or bow his knees, he strake one of them in the face, saying, "What? will you not reverence him for this great benefit which he hath done unto you? I tell you, if he had taken upon him our nature, as he hath taken upon him yours, we would more reverence him than you do." This story is prettily devised, for we should reverence him, we should honour him, and show ourselves thankful for those inestimable benefits that he hath showed unto us miserable wretched sinners, in taking upon him our nature.

Now Christ was born as on this day of the Virgin Mary, and very man except sin: for sin hath not defiled his flesh; for he was not begotten after the manner of other men, but by the power of the Holy Ghost. Mary was his natural† mother, and he was born to that end that he might deliver us from our sins and wickedness. To whom, with God the Father and the Holy Ghost, be praise and honour everlasting, world without end. *Amen.*

* But only a popish legend. † Real.

JOSEPH AND MARY AT JERUSALEM.

A SERMON,

Preached on the first Sunday after Epiphany, 1553.

LUKE ii.

And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem, after the custom of the feast.

HERE in this gospel is to be noted, how Mary the mother of our Saviour Christ, went to Jerusalem, having her husband, and the child Jesus, who was but twelve years of age, in her company, &c. But before I come to this gospel, I will rehearse unto you something which I took in hand last holyday; where I, taking occasion from the gospel that was read the same day, made mention how Jesus the Son of God, and Saviour of the world, was born in Bethlehem, and how God opened his birth unto the Gentiles, which were the three wise men, commonly called the three kings of Colen:* but they were not kings, as the fond† opinion of the common people is, but they were religious men, and men that feared God. Yea, and as some learned men gather, they were of the remnant of those whom Daniel the prophet had taught and instructed in the knowledge of God, and of his will. For Daniel being in captivity, bare great rule among the Gentiles, as appears in his book of prophecy, and therefore was able to set forth and promote the true religion of God, which was known at that time only among the Jews: which knowledge these wise men had, and had also a

* At Cologne some relics are preserved which are said to be the bodies of the three wise men who came from the east to worship the Saviour. Various miracles are said to have been wrought by these relics, and some prayers used in the Romish church are addressed to them.

† Foolish.

special understanding of astronomy. And now, they seeing the star, perceived that it was not a common appearance, but a token that the greatest king was born, of whom they had heard their forefathers talk, and therefore they came to Jerusalem, and inquired for this king, &c.

The last holy day I had no time to treat of this matter fully, and therefore I intend to speak somewhat of it at this time. And first of this word Jesus, what it is.

The evangelist saith here, "When Jesus was born." What is JESUS? JESUS is a Hebrew word, and signifies in our English tongue a Saviour and Redeemer of all mankind born into the world. This title and name, TO SAVE, pertains properly and principally unto him: for he saves us, else we had been lost for ever. Notwithstanding, the name of saviour is used in common speech, as the king is called a saviour, for he saves his subjects from all danger and harm that may ensue of their enemies. Likewise the physician is accounted a saviour, for he saves the sick man from the danger of his disease with good and wholesome medicines. So fathers and mothers are saviours, for they save their children from bodily harm that may happen unto them. So bridges over the waters are saviours, for they save us from the water. Likewise ships and boats, great and small vessels upon the seas, are saviours, for they save us from the fury, rage, and tempest of the sea. So judges are saviours, for they save, or at least should save, the people from wrong and oppression.

But all this is not a perfect saving. For what avails it to be saved from sickness, calamities, and oppression, when we shall be condemned after our death both body and soul, to remain with the devil and his angels for ever? We must therefore come to Jesus, who is the right and true Saviour: "And he it is that hath saved us from sin." Whom hath he saved?—His people. Who are his people? All that believe in him, and put their whole trust in him, and those that seek help and salvation at his hands, all such are his people. How saved he them? First, by magistrates he saved the poor from oppression and wrong: the children he saved through the tuition of their parents, from danger and peril; by physicians he saveth from sickness and diseases; but from sin he saveth only through his passion and blood-shedding. Therefore he may be called, and he is, the very right Saviour, for it is he that

saveth all his faithful people from all infelicity: and his salvation is sufficient to satisfy for all the world as concerning itself, but as concerning us, he saveth no more than such as put their trust in him. And as many as believe in him shall be saved, the others shall be cast out as infidels into everlasting damnation; not for lack of salvation, but for infidelity and lack of faith, which is the only cause of their damnation.

He saved us, from what?—even from sin. Now when he saved us from sin, then he saved us from the wrath of God, from affliction and calamities, from hell and death, and from damnation and everlasting pain: for sin is the cause and fountain of all mischief. Take away sin, then all other calamities wherein mankind are wrapped, are taken away, and quite gone and dispersed—therefore he saving us from sin, saved us from all affliction. But how does he save us from sin? In this manner—that sin shall not condemn us, sin shall not have the victory over us. He saved us not so, that we should be without sin, or that no sin should be left in our hearts. No, he saved us not so; for all manner of imperfections remain in us, yea in the best of us, so that if God should enter into judgment with us, we should all be damned. For there neither is nor ever was any man born into this world, who could say, I am clean from sin, except Jesus Christ. Therefore he saved us not from sin, by quite taking away the same from us, so that we should no more be inclined to it; but rather he hath so vanquished the power and strength of the same sin, that it shall not be able to condemn those who believe in him: for sin is remitted, and not imputed unto believers.

He saved us from sin, not taking it clean away, but rather the strength and force of the same; so likewise he saved us from other calamities, not taking the same quite away, but rather the power of the same: so that no calamity nor misery should be able to hurt us that are in Christ Jesus. And likewise he saved us from death, not that we should not die, but that death should have no victory over us, nor condemn us; but rather should be a way and entrance into salvation and everlasting life: for death is a gate to enter into everlasting life. No man can come to everlasting life, but he must first die bodily; but this death cannot hurt the faithful, for they are exempted

from all danger through the death and passion of Jesus Christ our Saviour, who with his death hath overcome our death.

Here is to be noted the error of the Jews, who believed that this Saviour should be a temporal king and ruler, and deliver them out of the hands of the Romans; for the Jews at that time were under the government of the Romans, having been subdued by Pompey, the great and valiant captain, as Josephus, a great, learned man amongst the Jews, and Titus Livius do witness. Therefore they believed that this Saviour should not only set them at liberty, but should subdue all nations; so that the Jews with their Saviour should be the rulers of all the whole world, and that the whole world should serve them. This was at the same time, and is yet still the opinion of the Jews, who will not learn, nor understand that Jesus saved them and us, not from the power of the Romans, but from sin, death, the devil and hell, and set us at liberty, and made us the children of God, and the inheritors of life everlasting.

The papists, who are the very enemies of Christ, make him to be a Saviour after their own fancy, and not after the word of God, wherein he declares himself, and has set out and opened his mind unto us. They follow, I say, not the Scripture, which is the very leader* to God, but they regard more their own inventions, and therefore they make him a Saviour after this fashion.

They consider there shall be after the general resurrection a general judgment, where all mankind shall be gathered together to receive their judgment. Then shall Christ, say the papists, sit as a judge, having power over heaven and earth; and all those that have done well in this world, and have steadfastly prayed upon their beads, and have gone a pilgrimage, &c., and so with their good works have deserved heaven and everlasting life; those, say they, that have merited with their own good works, shall be received of Christ, and admitted to everlasting salvation—as for the other, that have not merited everlasting life, they shall be cast into everlasting darkness; for Christ will not suffer wicked sinners to be taken into heaven, but rather receive those which deserve. And so it appears that they esteem our Saviour not to be a Redeemer, but only a Judge, who shall give sentence on the wicked to go

* Directs us.

into everlasting fire, and the good he will call to everlasting felicity.

And this is the opinion of the papists concerning our Saviour, which opinion is most detestable and abominable in the sight of God. For it diminishes the passion of Christ, it takes away the power and strength of the same passion, it defiles the honour and glory of Christ, it forsakes and denies Christ and all his benefits. For if we shall be judged according to our own deservings, we shall be damned everlastingly. Therefore learn here, every good Christian, to abhor this most detestable and dangerous poison of the papists, who go about to thrust Christ out of his seat; learn here, I say, to leave all papistry and to stick only to the word of God, which teaches thee that Christ is not only a judge, but a justifier, a giver of salvation, and a taker away of sin. For he purchased our salvation through his painful death, and we receive the same through believing in him; as St. Paul teaches us, saying, "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Rom. iii. 24.) In these words of St. Paul, all merits and estimation of works are excluded and wholly taken away. For if it were for our works' sake, then it were not freely; but St. Paul saith "freely." Which will you now believe, St. Paul, or the papists? It is better for you to believe St. Paul, rather than those most wicked and covetous papists, who seek nothing but their own wealth, and not your salvation.

But if any of you will ask now, How shall I come by my salvation? How shall I get everlasting life? I answer —If you believe with an unfeigned heart that Jesus Christ the Son of God came into the world, and took upon him our flesh of the virgin Mary, and suffered under Pontius Pilate, in the city of Jerusalem, the most painful death and passion upon the cross, and was hanged between two thieves for our sins' sake, for in him was no sin; "neither," as the prophet Isaiah saith, "was there found in his mouth any guile or deceit." (Is. liii.) For he was a Lamb undefiled, and therefore suffered not for his own sake, but for our sake, and with his suffering hath taken away all our sins and wickedness, and hath made us, who were the children of the devil, the children of God; fulfilling the law for us to the uttermost; giving us freely as a gift his fulfilling to be ours, so that we are now fulfillers of the law by his fulfilling: so that the law may not condemn us,

for he hath fulfilled it, so that we believing in him are fulfillers of the law, and just before the face of God. For Christ with his passion hath deserved, that all who believe in him shall be saved, not through their own good works, but through his passion.

Here thou seest whereupon hangeth thy salvation, namely—believing in the Son of God—who hath prepared and gotten heaven for all those that believe in him, and live uprightly according to his word. For we must do good works, and God requires them of us; but yet we may not put our trust in them, nor think to get heaven with the same, for our works are wicked and evil, and the best of them are imperfect. As for those which are evil, no man is so foolish as to think to get heaven with evil doing. And as concerning our good works, they are imperfect, and so not agreeable to the law of God, who requires most perfect works; by which it appears that the best works which are done by man are hateful before God, and therefore not able to get or to deserve salvation. Wherefore we must be justified, not through our good works, but through the passion of Christ, and so live by a free justification and righteousness in Christ Jesus. Whosoever thus believes, mistrusting himself and his own doings, and trusting in the merits of Christ, he shall get the victory over death, the devil, and hell; so that they shall not hurt him, neither are all their powers able to stand against any of those which are in Christ Jesus. Therefore when thou art in sickness, and feelest that the end of thy bodily life approaches, and that the devil with his assaults is coming to tempt thee, and have thy soul, and so to bring everlasting confusion, then withstand him strongly in faith; namely, when he brings thee low, for he is an old doctor,* and very well learned in the Scripture, as appears in the fourth chapter of Matthew, where he reasoned with Christ. So will he reason with you, saying, "Sir, it is written in the law, that all those which have not fulfilled the law to the uttermost, shall be condemned. Now you have not fulfilled it, but have been wicked, and a transgressor of it; you are mine; and therefore you shall go to hell, and there be punished world without end." Against such temptations and assaults of the devil, we must fight on this wise, and answer, "I acknowledge myself to be a sinner most miserable, and filthy in the sight of God, and

* One who is well able to teach.

therefore of myself I should be damned according to thy saying; but there is yet one thing behind, which is this—I know and believe without all doubt, that God has sent his Son into the world, who suffered a most painful and shameful death for me, and fulfilled the law wherewith thou wouldest condemn me; yea, he has given me as a gift his fulfilling of the law, so that I am now reckoned a fulfiller of the law before God; therefore depart, thou most cruel enemy, depart; for I know that my Redeemer liveth, who has taken away all my sin and wickedness, and has set me at unity with God his heavenly Father, and made me a lawful inheritor of everlasting life."

Whoso in such wise fighteth with the devil, shall have the victory, for he is not able to stand against Christ; and it appears throughout all the Scripture most plainly and manifestly, that the power of the devil is vanquished, when the word of God is used against him; and this is stated not only in the Scripture, both New and Old Testament, but also in other writings. For Eusebius Pamphilius has many stories, wherein is mentioned the impotency of the devil. And we have a story written by a Spaniard in the Latin tongue, and affirmed by many godly and well learned men: which story happened in a town of Germany, where a poor husbandman lying sore sick and ready to die, they that kept him company in the chamber where he lay, saw a man of great stature and very horrible to look upon, his eyes being all fiery, coming into the chamber. This terrible devil turning himself unto the sick body, said, "Sir, thou must die this day, and I am come hither to fetch thy soul, for that pertaineth unto me." The sick man answered with a good countenance, saying, "I am ready to depart whensoever I shall be called of my Lord, who gave unto me my soul, and put the same into my body, therefore to him only I will deliver it, and not unto thee, for he hath delivered my soul from thy power, with the precious blood of his only Son." Then said the devil, "Thou art laden with many sins, and I am come hither to write them together." And he drew forth out of his bosom pen, ink, and paper, setting himself at the table that stood there ready to write. The sick man hearing his mind, and perceiving his intent, said, "I know myself to be laden with many sins, but yet I believe that the same are taken away through the passion and suffering of Christ, through whom I steadfastly believe that his heavenly Father is

pleased with me: but yet if thou wilt write my sins, thou mayest do it, and then write thus, that all my righteousness is as a filthy cloth: therefore I cannot stand in the judgment of God." The devil sitting at the table, wrote this with a good will, and desired the sick man to go forward in confessing, and numbering his sins.* Then the sick man alleging the Scriptures saith, "that the eternal and living God promised, saying, For mine own sake only I take away your iniquities. Further thou, O God, hast promised, that though our sins be as red as the scarlet, thou wilt make them as white as the snow." But these words the devil wrote not, but instantly desired him to go forward as he had begun. The sick man with great sorrow and heaviness cried out, saying, "The Son of God appeared, that he might destroy the works of the devil." After these words the devil vanished out of sight, and shortly after the sick man departed unto the living God.

Here you see how the devil will go to work with us, when we are sick; therefore let us learn now while we are in health to know God and his word, that we may withstand this horrible enemy; knowing that we shall have the victory through Christ our Saviour, in whom and by whom God is pleased with us, and takes in good part all our doings.

We have a common saying amongst us: "Every thing is as it is taken." We read of king Henry the Seventh, at a time when he was served with a cup of drink, a gentleman that brought the cup, in making obeisance, the cover fell to the ground; the king, seeing his folly, saith, "Sir, is this well done?" "Yea, sir," said he, "if your majesty take it well." With this pretty answer the king was pacified. So it is with us as touching our salvation. Our works are imperfect, but God takes the same well for Christ's sake; he will not impute unto us the imperfectness of our works, for all our imperfections and sins are drowned in the blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and whosoever believeth the same steadfastly, shall not perish. But we must be sure of it; we may not doubt, but be certain that Christ hath destroyed the works of satan; that is,

* The church of Rome had narrated many stories of satanic operations, to promote its own views. The story here related by Latimer, probably was intended to counteract the Romish legends, and is too characteristic of the times to be omitted. Of course it is only to be considered as a parable.

he hath taken his power from him, so that he can do us no more harm; and we must certainly believe his promises, which are, that we shall have life everlasting in believing in him, and being sure of his promises: then are we sure of our salvation. Here you see, that we must seek our salvation, not in our works, but in Christ. For if we look upon our works, we shall never be sure; as I said before, they are evil and imperfect; and evil works deserve anger, and imperfect works are punishable, and not acceptable, and therefore they deserve not heaven, but rather punishment.

But you will say, seeing we can get nothing with good works, we will do nothing at all; or else do such works as shall best please us; seeing we shall have no reward for our well doing. I answer: We are commanded by God's word to apply ourselves to goodness, every one in his calling; but we must not do it to deserve heaven thereby; we must do good works to show ourselves thankful for all his benefits which he has poured upon us, and in respect of God's commandment, considering that God willeth us to do well; not to make a merit of it; for it were a denying of Christ, to say, I will live well and deserve heaven. This is a damnable opinion; let us rather think thus, I will live well to show myself thankful towards my loving God, and Christ my Redeemer.

Further, in this gospel is to be noted the earnestness of these wise men who were but Gentiles, as you have heard before. These men were not doubled-hearted, speaking one thing with their tongues, and thinking another in their hearts. No, they are none such: but they openly profess wherefore they come, and say, "Where is this new born king of the Jews, for we have seen his star, and are come to worship him?" This is a great matter for them to do. For the Jews at that time had a king whose name was Herod, not a Jew born, but an Idumean, who was not their lawful nor natural king, but somewhat with craft and subtlety, and somewhat with power, had obtained the crown and the kingdom.

Now the men came inquiring for the lawful king who was newly born; which they could not do without danger of their lives. But here appears that faith fears no danger. They had seen the star, and they were sure and certain in their hearts that the King of all kings was born; and they believed that this King was able to deliver them out of

trouble; and this confidence and faith in God made them hearty to go and inquire without any dissembling for this new King, not fearing the old, &c.

Herod hearing this news was much troubled, for he was afraid the matter would go against him, and that he should be thrust out of his seat, which would have been a great displeasure unto him; for he was not minded to give place to any other king with his good will. And all the citizens were sore dismayed, for they would rather have rest and quietness and serve the old, than receive the new with peril of their goods and bodies. So we see at this day, where this gospel is preached, and this new King proclaimed, there are more who had rather be in quietness and serve the devil than stand in jeopardy of their lives and serve God; and so they esteem this world more than God, his word, and their own salvation.

The said Herod, as soon as he heard these tidings, sent for the bishops and the learned, and inquired of them where Christ should be born. The bishops were well read in the prophets and the law, and made answer forthwith, that Christ should be born at Bethlehem. Herod hearing that, sent for the wise men to examine them better of the matter, asking them what time they had seen the star. And after he had reasoned enough with them, he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word again that I may come and worship him also."

See what a crafty fox this Herod was, as our Saviour called him;* he made a pretence like as if he were willing to give over his kingdom, and to give place unto the new king. Such was his pretence outwardly; but his heart was poisoned with the poison of cruelty and ambition, so that he was minded to have killed the child as soon as he might get him; which intention of his appeared afterwards. For hearing that the wise men were returned another way into their country, he by and by sent his guard and killed all the children that were two years old, and under, at Bethlehem, and in that country. But for all his cruelty, God was able to preserve Christ that he should not be slain amongst these children. Therefore the angel gave Joseph warning that he should go into Egypt.

Here learn to trust in God, for "against the Almighty

* Herod the Great had the children put to death. It was Herod Antipas, his son, of whom our Saviour spoke thus.

prevaileth no counsel." This Herod thought himself wiser than God and the whole world; yet for all that, he was much deceived; for he could neither destroy the wise men nor Christ, with all his wit and counsel: "the Lord that sitteth above, laughed him to scorn." (Ps. ii.) He brought his counsel to nought, and he delivered them out of his hands. So undoubtedly he will do with us. He will deliver us out of all our troubles, and from all our enemies whensoever they shall oppress us, if we put our trust in him.

Now after they were departed from Herod, they went their way, seeking the child. And as soon as they came out of the city, they saw the star, which guided them until they came unto the house where Jesus was, with his mother, and Joseph his father-in-law. And when these men came thither what did they? They worshipped him. Note here, they worshipped *him*, saith the evangelist; here is confounded and overthrown the foolish opinion and doctrine of the papists who would have us worship a creature before the Creator, Mary before her Son. These wise men do not so; they worship not Mary. Wherefore? Because God only is to be worshipped. But Mary is not God; therefore they worship not her, but him, who is the very Son of God, yea God himself, and yet very man. And therefore if it had been allowed or commanded that Mary the mother of Christ should have been called upon and worshipped, surely then had these wise men been greatly to blame; but they knew that Mary was a blessed woman, and yet not such as should be worshipped.

Let all those learn here who are so foolish, that they will rather call upon Mary, on whom they have no commandment to call, than upon God who has commanded us to call upon him, as he saith in the Psalms, "Call upon me in the time of thy trouble, and I will hear thee." (Ps. l.)

They gave him gifts, gold, myrrh, and frankincense. Gold, they gave him to signify his kingdom; myrrh, to signify his mortality; frankincense, to signify his priesthood. And afterwards they departed another way into their own country, by the admonition of the angel. After their departure, Joseph with Mary and the child fled into Egypt, for fear of Herod, who was minded to destroy the child; where you may learn to know the wonderful provision that God ever maketh for those that put their trust in him; for to the intent they might have wherewith to

bear their costs for such a journey, God moved the hearts of the wise men to give him gold. Learn, I say, here to put your trust in God, and to have a good confidence in him; for he is such a loving father to those that trust in him, that he will not suffer them to have lack or need of any thing in this world, of food and necessary things; for he careth for us that believe in him, as well as for Mary and her Son. Therefore he will not suffer us to lack what is needful to soul or body; for the king and prophet David saith, "I have never seen the just man forsaken or rejected of God, or cast away." (Ps. xxxvii.) "No," saith he, "I have never seen the just man perish for lack of necessary things." But what is a just man? He is just who believeth in our Saviour. For as you have heard before, those who believe in Christ are justified before God; they are quite delivered from all sins, and therefore may be called just, for so they are in the sight of God; such, saith the prophet, he never saw forsaken of God.

But for all this, we may not tempt God; we must labour and do our business, every one of his vocation and order wherein God has called him. Labour thou, and God will bless thee, and increase thy labours; so that thou shalt have no lack of necessary things so long as thou walkest uprightly in thy vocation, like as he provided for Mary and her child. But yet thou must labour and do thy business, as it is written, "Be content to work for thy living, and it shall go well with thee, and thou shalt have enough, for I will make thee a living." This promise of God surely is a comfortable thing, though but little regarded of the people: for they act as if there were no God, and deceive and oppress one another. Every man scrapeth for himself, ever in fear that he shall lack, not regarding that promise of God; but God is yet alive, and surely he will most grievously punish such wicked unthankfulness and mistrust of his word and promise. What might be more comfortable unto us, if we had grace to believe it, than his loving promises, wherein he showeth himself a loving Father? David saith, "I have been young, and now am old; but yet I never saw the righteous lack bread." (Ps. xxxvii.) Here learn, O man, to have respect toward God, esteem the word of God and his promises as they are; that is, as most certain and true: believe them, hang upon them, labour and do thy business truly, "And it shall be well with thee;" thou shalt have enough, thou

shalt have a store-house that never shall be empty, that is, thy labour. For the poor man's treasure-house is to labour and travail, and he is more sure of his living than the rich; for God's promises cannot be stolen by any thief; God's promises are a living to him that truly laboureth and putteth his trust in him. But the rich man is not sure of his riches, for a thief may come and steal them, or else the same may perish by fire, or one way or other: therefore the poor faithful man is more sure of his living, than if he had the same in his chest; for God's promises are not vain, they are most certain, and happy are those who believe the same: they shall not only have enough in this world, but afterwards life everlasting, without any sorrow and misery.

Thus much I was minded to tell you of this gospel; now let us return to the gospel of this day, wherein I will note two or three short parts; for I will not trouble you much longer, because the time is much spent.

"And when he was twelve years old," &c. God Almighty had commanded in his law, Deuteronomy, the sixteenth chapter, that all the males should come together three times in the year, for these three causes. The first was, that they should learn to trust in God, and not in their own strength; and it was a great matter unto them to leave the land void. As if we Englishmen had commandment all to come to London, and leave our country; were it not to be feared that the country should be hurt either by the Scots or Frenchmen in our absence? Surely, I think it were very dangerous. So at that time, the Jews had great and mortal enemies round about them, yet God commanded them to leave the land void; as if he would say, "Come you together after my commandment, and let me alone with your enemies, I will keep them from you so that they shall not hurt you." And this was the first cause why he would have them come together.

The second cause was, that they should learn the law and commandments of God: for there was the chief temple of the Jews; and all the spirituality of the whole land were there gathered together, and taught the people the law, and how they should walk before God; and this was the second cause.

The third cause of their coming together, was for acquaintance sake, for God would have them knit together in earnest love and charity. And therefore he willeth

them to come together, that they who dwelt on the one side of the land, might be acquainted with them that dwelt on the other side, so that there might be a perfect love between them; for God hateth nothing more than discord. And these are the causes why they were commanded to come together every year three times.

Now at this time Mary went with her husband Joseph: belike she was desirous to hear the word of God, and that made her to take so great a journey in hand, for she was not commanded by the law to be there, for women were at liberty to go or tarry.

Here note the painfulness of Mary, that she was content to go so great a journey for God's sake. I fear this journey of hers will condemn a great many of us, who will not go out of the door to hear God's word. Therefore learn here, first, to love and embrace God's word. Secondly, to follow all good orders. Thirdly, to be content to go with thy neighbours every holy day to the church; for it is a good and godly order, and God will have it so. But peradventure you will say unto me, How chance you go not to the service upon the holy days? I have none other excuse but this, namely, that I shall go thither in vain. Mary went thither to hear the word of God; and if I might hear the word of God there, I would go thither with a good will: but first, the parson of the church is ignorant and unable to teach the word of God, neither bears he any good will to the word of God; therefore it were better for me to teach my family at home, than to go thither and spend my time in vain, and so lose my labour. This I have to allege for myself, that if the curate were as he ought to be, I would not be from the church upon the holy day.*

Jesus and Mary with all their neighbours were at Jerusalem: and after they had done their business, they came home again; Mary in the company of other women, and Joseph her husband in the company of men; but Jesus the child was left behind, for Mary thought he was with his father, and Joseph thought he was with his mother. At night when they met together, she asked him, and he asked her for the child; for before they were not aware that they

* Many of the clergy at that time were papists in their hearts, and as such neglected the spiritual instruction of their congregations. Even at the present day the comparatively small attendance at the house of God upon the week days is painful to the true ministers of Christ of all denominations.

had lost him. Oh what sorrow and tribulation rose then in their hearts! I think no tongue can show what pain and sorrow this mother felt in her heart, for the loss of her child: for she thought thus, "God has rejected me, and therefore has taken my son from me, I shall no more find him. Alas, that ever I was born, that I should lose my son, who I heard say should be the Saviour of the world. This Saviour is lost now through my negligence and slothfulness; what shall I do? where shall I seek him?" In this great heaviness, she turned back again to Jerusalem, inquiring for him by the way amongst their friends and acquaintance; but he could neither be heard of nor found until they came to Jerusalem, where they found him amongst the doctors and learned men, arguing with them, and posing them.

Here is to be noted a negligence in Mary and Joseph; therefore they who go about to make Mary to be without sin are much deceived; for here it appears plainly that Mary was in fault. Here also all parents may learn to be diligent and careful about their children. The common sort of parents are either too careful for their children, or else too negligent. But the right carefulness that you should have over your children, is first to consider that God has appointed his angels to keep and save your children from all perils and dangers that may happen unto them, as plainly appears every day; for surely a child is in many dangers of his life daily, but the angel of God keepeth them; and therefore the parents should not be too careful, neither yet too negligent; for they should consider, that it is the will, pleasure, and commandment of Almighty God, that they should keep their children in safe custody, and preserve them as much as in them lieth, from all danger and harm.

Further, here it is to be noted, that this fault and sin of Mary was not set out to embolden us to sin, but rather to keep us from desperation when we have sinned: making this reckoning, "Hath God pardoned his saints and forgiven their faults? then he will be merciful unto me, and forgive my sin." So by their example we may strengthen our faith, but not take boldness from them to sin.

After they found him, Mary begins to blame him, saying, "Son, why hast thou done this unto us?" Here she speaks, like a mother, and is very quick with him: but he made her as quick an answer, saying, "Know ye not that

I must do the business of my Father?" &c. We learn here how far children are bound to obey their parents, namely, so far as the same may stand with godliness. If they will have us go further, and pluck us from true religion and the serving of God, make them this answer, "We ought rather to obey God than men;" (Acts v.) for otherwise we are not bound to obey our parents, &c. Here not only children may learn, but subjects and servants, to obey their king and masters, so far as it may stand with God's pleasure, and further we ought not to go.

The child went home with them, and was obedient to them; although he had partly signified unto them wherefore he was sent into the world; namely, to teach men the way to heaven; yet he remained with them in his obedience from this time, being of the age of twelve years, unto the age of thirty years. And in this mean time (as it is thought) he exercised his father's occupation, which was that of a carpenter. This is a wonderful thing, that the Saviour of the world, and the King above all kings, was not ashamed to labour, yea and to use so simple an occupation. Here he sanctified all manner of occupations, exhorting and teaching with this example every man to follow and keep the state whereunto God has called him; and then we shall have living enough in this world; doing well and after his pleasure, and in the world to come life everlasting; which Christ by his death and passion hath deserved for us. To whom, with God the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, both now and for ever. *Amen.*

THE LEPER CLEANSED.

A SERMON,

Preached on the Twenty-fourth day of January, 1553.

MATTHEW viii.

When he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. And behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth his hand and touched him, saying, I will, be thou clean. And instantly his leprosy was cleansed.

THIS is a notable miracle, and a most comfortable history, which though it were done upon a leper only, yet the doctrine of it appertains to us and to all men, and so shall it do unto the end of the world. For St. Paul saith, "Whatsoever is written, is written for our instruction," (Rom. xv.) Therefore if we consider and ponder this story well, we shall find much matter in it to our great comfort and edifying.

"When he was come down," &c. Christ had been upon the mountain making a sermon, which is contained in the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of this evangelist, which sermon is very notable,* and contains the sum of a Christian man's life. At the which sermon the people were greatly astonished, and much marvelled: whereby you may note the strength and efficacy of the word of God: which word, if it light upon good ground, that is upon a good heart that will receive it, it turns the heart with its power, and brings a marvelling, like as it happened unto this people, who had received the word, and marvelled at it.

Also, you may note here the inconstancy of the people; who now greatly esteemed and regarded our Saviour and

* Important.

his word, and shortly after consented to his death, by persuasion of the priests: which was a great and heinous wickedness in the face of God. Therefore let us not follow their example, neither let us be persuaded, by any man living, to forsake God and his word, but rather let us suffer death for it. Howbeit I fear, that if there should come a persecution, there would be a great number of those who now speak fair of the gospel, like unto this people; for I fear they would soon be persuaded by the papistical priests, to do and say against Christ, to forsake his word, and deny the gospel; like as these people did, quite forgetting and setting aside all that which they had heard from our Saviour upon the mountain. Let us therefore, I say, beware, and let us acknowledge the great love of God our heavenly Father, showed unto us so plainly in these latter days, that none except he is wilful and obstinate, but may understand the same, which is as great a benefit as may be. And happy are we if we consider this great goodness of God, and show ourselves thankful unto him by godly living and honest conversation, according to his commandment. And in this gospel is specially to be noted, the great love and kindness of our Saviour toward mankind, who first preached unto the people, and taught them the way unto everlasting life, and then came down and healed the diseased man; that is, he first succoured our souls, and afterwards comforted our bodies.

There cometh a leper unto him, saying, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst help me." This leper took Christ to be a Saviour, and therefore he came unto him for help. So let us come unto him, for he is the Saviour of mankind, and he is the only helper that succours both our bodies and souls. He saveth our souls by his word, if when we hear the same we believe it. The salvation of our bodies shall appear at the last day, where soul and body shall come together, and there shall be rewarded. So that if the soul be saved, the body is saved; for soul and body shall go together; and so he saveth both our bodies and souls. Note here also the behaviour of this leper, for by his example the best doctor in divinity need not be ashamed to learn: for in him appears a marvellous strong faith and confidence which he had in Christ; for he doubted not but that Christ was able to help him: neither mistrusted he his goodness and mercy. Therefore faith moved him to come to Christ, and to desire help of him.

And note here also the love and great charity of our Saviour Christ, which he first showed to the whole multitude, in teaching them so earnestly and diligently the way to everlasting life. And then he extended his great compassion and mercy unto this leper, whom all men abhorred, because of his filthiness and uncleanness. But Christ abhorred him not; yea, he is content not only to hear his request, and to talk with him, but also he laid his hands upon his filthy body. O how great a kindness was this! O what a wonderful thing is this! that the King of all kings talketh here most familiarly with a poor wretch and filthy leper! O what profound and incomprehensible love he bears unto us! It is esteemed a great thing, when a king vouchsafes to talk with a poor man, being one of his subjects: what a great thing then is it, that the King of all kings, yea, the Ruler of heaven and earth, talks with a poor man, hears his request, and mercifully grants the same! This Evangelist saith, "Behold, there came a leper, and worshipped him," but another Evangelist saith, "He fell upon his knees before him." These are gestures and behaviour, which signify a reverence done unto him, or a subjection, or submission.

For although our Saviour went like a poor man, yet this leper had conceived such a faith and trust in him, that he had no regard to his outward appearance, but followed his faith, which faith told him, that this was the Saviour. Therefore he set aside all outward show, and came with great reverence unto him, desiring his help. And here you may learn good manners; for it is a good sight, and very commendable, and is also the commandment of God, that we should give honour to those to whom honour belongeth; especially preachers ought to be reverenced, and that for their office sake, for they are the officers of God, and God's treasurers. And such as are proud persons may be ashamed by this leper: for this is certain and true, that a proud heart never prayeth well, and therefore it is hated before God. Wherefore amongst other vices, beware of pride and stoutness. What was the cause that Lucifer, being the fairest angel in heaven, was made the most horrible devil; and cast down from heaven into hell? Pride only was the cause of it. Therefore St. Augustine hath a saying: "Whensoever thou seest a proud man, doubt not but he is the son of the devil." Let us learn therefore by this leper, to have a humble and meek spirit.

Moreover, this man was a leper and a miserable man, one despised of all men, and an outcast. For it was commanded in the law of God, that no man should keep company with a leper; therefore it appears that he was in great misery: but what doth he? whither runs he for help and succour? Even to Christ, to him only he runneth; not to witches or sorcerers, as ungodly men do; but he seeks for comfort of our Saviour. Now when you are in distress, in misery, in sickness, in poverty, or any other calamity, follow the example of this leper, run to Christ, seek help and comfort only at his hands, and then you shall be delivered and made safe, like as he was delivered after he came to Christ.

But what brought he with him? even his faith: he believed that Christ was able to help him, and therefore according to his faith it happened unto him. Then it shall be necessary for thee to bring faith with thee, for without faith thou canst get nothing at his hands. Bring therefore, I say, faith with thee; believe that he is able to help thee, and that he is merciful and will help thee. And when thou comest furnished with such a faith, surely thou shalt be heard; thou shalt find him a loving Father, and a faithful friend, and a Redeemer of thee out of all tribulation. For faith is like a hand wherewith we receive the benefits of God; and except we take his benefits with the hand of faith, we shall never have them.

Here in this gospel you may learn the right use of Scripture; for when you shall hear and read such stories as this is, you must not think that such stories and acts done by our Saviour are but temporal; but you must consider that they are done for our sake, and for our instruction and teaching. Therefore when you hear such stories, you must consider eternal things which are set before your eyes by such stories, and so we must apply them to ourselves. As for example, here is a leper, and he calleth upon Christ with a good faith, and was healed. You will say, What is that unto us? Even as he was a leper in his body, so are we lepers in our souls. He was unclean in his body, and we are unclean in our souls. He was healed by believing in Christ, so we must be healed by him, or else perish eternally. Therefore if thou wilt not perish, call upon him as this leper did, and thou shalt be helped and cleansed of thy leprosy; that is, from all thy sin. So I say, we must apply the Scriptures unto us, and

take out something to strengthen our faith withal, and to edify ourselves with God's word.

Another example we read in the Scripture, that God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with fire. Wherefore? Even for sin's sake. What manner of sin? whoredom, lechery, and other uncleanness. Also for despising and abusing of poor men and strangers. What is this to us now? We learn in this story, that God will not suffer sin, nor wilful sinners; but he will punish the same either here, or else in the world to come, or else in both: he will not let them go unpunished. Therefore when we hear this story, we may learn to avoid all sin and wickedness, and to live uprightly and godly; and this we learn by that story, which is an example of God's wrath and anger against sin.

Take another example of faith: we read in the Scripture that Abraham believed God, and his faith justified him. Now when I hear this, I must apply it to myself in this manner. Abraham believed in God, and his faith justified him; I will believe in God and follow his word, then shall I also be justified: for St. Paul saith, that the same believing of Abraham, is not written for Abraham's sake, but for our sakes, to teach us that God will justify us if we believe in him, and punish us when we are unfaithful.

Now note here how this man came: see how humbly and meekly he came, and what a good and strong faith he had in Christ, which faith appeared by his coming. For if he had been without faith, he would not have come unto him, because our Saviour kept but a mean estate, not a king's court; he was poor, and therefore the more despised of the misbelievers. But this man believed, and therefore he came unto him. Learn therefore by his example, to go to Christ in what affliction soever we are: let us run to him, and pray unto God for his sake: allege him, put him before thee, and beware that thou call not upon any creature or saint: for it is a great wickedness before God to pray to saints; for with the saints we have nothing to do, but to keep in memory and follow their godly life, and righteous living. But our prayer must be made unto Christ only, like as this man does here in this gospel.

But peradventure you will say, he was upon the earth when this man called upon him, and therefore he was so soon heard. I answer, he promised to his disciples after

his resurrection, that he would be with us to the end of the whole world: his words are true, for he cannot be made a liar; therefore we must believe him, and no doubt he will be present with us whenever we call upon him. Call upon him therefore, and not upon saints; for if we call upon saints we make them gods. For if I call upon St. Paul here, and another man that is a thousand miles off, calls upon him also, then we make him like unto God to be every where, to hear and see all things; which is against all Scripture: for God only is omnipotent, that is, he only is almighty, and he is every where, and seeth all things, and so no creature else doth. Therefore those who attribute such things as appertain to God only, who is our Creator, to any creature, they do naughtily and wickedly, and shall be punished for it in hell-fire, except they amend and be sorry for their faults.

But what was this man's prayer? Did he pray upon his beads, and say our Lady's Psalter? No, no; he was never brought up in any such popish schools. What said he? "If thou wilt, O Lord, thou canst make me clean, and put away my disease." This is but a short prayer, but it contains much. First, it teaches how we should pray unto God, namely, conditionally in our outward and bodily things, that is to say, when it pleases him; and so did our Saviour himself pray to his heavenly Father, saying, "If thou wilt, Father, let this cup pass from me." (Matt. xxvi.) So we should do, when we are in any manner of tribulation or sickness, that is, pray unto God conditionally, saying, O Lord God, if it please thee, and if it may stand with thy honour and glory, and the salvation of my soul, help and deliver me: we must put the matter to him, for he knows best what is good for us. Peradventure he sees, that if we should be without affliction, we should be wanton, wicked, and proud, and so sin against him, and damn our souls; and then it were better for us to be in sickness than in health. Therefore we must desire help, if it please him; that is to say, when it appertains to our salvation, or else it were a thousand times better to be sick still, than to be out of sickness, and fall from God and all goodness; he therefore knows best what is good for us. Trust in him, be content to be ruled by him; he shall and will order the matter so, that thou shalt find him a loving Father unto thee, as this man did here. Secondly, this prayer expresses the faith which this poor

man had in Christ, for he saith, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst help me." If thou wilt, saith he, noting him to be omnipotent and almighty. And in these words he expresses the Divinity of Christ our Saviour, "If thou wilt." He believeth him to be able to help him; so we should do in our prayers. We must believe that he may and will help us, as it appears by this man, who was made whole straightway. Also it appears, partly by the confession and faith of this man, and partly by the end of the matter, that he was made perfectly whole. So we shall be healed of our diseases, when we come unto him with such a faith as this man did, and specially if we call as earnestly upon him. But, O Lord, what slothfulness is in our hearts! how slender a faith have we! how imperfect and cold is our prayer! So that it is no marvel it is not heard of God. But we must always consider that God is able to save us, and believe undoubtedly that he will save us. So that when I am sick, as is said before, I may doubt whether God will deliver me from my sickness, or no: but I may not doubt of everlasting life.

Therefore if I am sick, I must pray as this man, "Lord, if thou wilt;" conditionally. For it may be, when I come out of my sickness, I shall become more wicked and ungodly; which God knowing, keeps me still in sickness; and so it is better for me to be in sickness still than whole.

So we may learn here to call upon God conditionally. As for our general salvation, which is the salvation of our souls, we may not doubt in that, nor call for it conditionally, but apprehend God by his promise, saying, "Lord, thou hast promised that all who believe in thee shall be saved. Lord, for thy mercy and promise sake, and for thy death and passion sake, take away my sin, wash me with the blood which thou hast shed upon the cross. Thou hast promised that all who believe shall be saved through thee. Now, Lord, for thy promise sake, help me. I believe, O Lord, help my infirmity and increase my faith." As touching thy bodily health, put it to his good-will, and offer thyself unto him, saying, "Lord, I am thy creature, thou hast given unto me soul and body, my body is sick now; when it pleases thee help me; if not, give me grace to bear patiently this thy visitation: for in like manner didst thou visit thy holy martyrs who suffered great calamity, and they desired to be delivered, but thou deliveredst

them not bodily, but yet thou savedst them after their death. So I trust thou wilt do with me."

Now, how came it to pass that this leper had such a great faith and confidence in our Saviour? Truly by hearing the word of God, for he had heard our Saviour say, "Come unto me, all ye that are laden and oppressed with miseries, and I will refresh you." This he had heard and believed, therefore he came boldly unto him, desiring help of him; and so here is verified the saying of St. Paul, "Faith cometh by hearing." (Rom. x.) The ordinary way to get faith is through hearing the word of God: for the word of God is of such power, that it enters and pierces the heart of man that hears it earnestly; as well appears in this leper.

We read in the apostles, (Acts xiii.) that when St. Paul had made a long sermon at Antioch, the evangelist saith, there believed "as many as were ordained to everlasting life:" with which saying a great number of people have been offended, and have said, We perceive, that only those shall come to believe, and so to everlasting life, who are chosen of God unto it: therefore it is no matter whatsoever we do, for if we are chosen to everlasting life we shall have it; and so they have opened a door unto themselves of all wickedness and carnal liberty, against the true meaning of the Scripture. For if the most part be damned, the fault is not in God, but in themselves: for it is written, "God would that all men should be saved:" (1 Tim. ii.) but they themselves procure their own damnation, and despise the passion of Christ by their own wicked and inordinate living. Here we may learn to keep ourselves from all curious and dangerous questions; when we hear that some are chosen and some are damned, let us have good hope that we shall be amongst the chosen, and live after this hope, that is, uprightly and godly; then thou shalt not be deceived. Think that God hath chosen those who believe in Christ, and that Christ is the book of life. If thou believest in him, then thou art written in the book of life, and shalt be saved. So we need not go about to trouble ourselves with curious questions of the predestination of God. But let us rather endeavour ourselves that we may be in Christ; for when we are in him, then are we well, and then we may be sure that we are ordained to everlasting life.

But you will say, How shall I know that I am in the

book of life? How shall I try myself to be elect of God to everlasting life? I answer, first we may know, that we may one time be in the book, and another time come out again; as it appeared by David, who was written in the book of life. But when he sinned, he at that same time was out of the book of the favour of God, until he had repented and was sorry for his faults. So we may be in the book one time, and afterward, when we forget God and his word, and do wickedly, we come out of the book; that is, out of Christ, which is the book.* And in that book are written all believers. But I will tell you how you shall know when you are in the book; and there are three special notes whereby you may know the same. The first note is, if you know your sin, and feel your own wretchedness and filthiness, which is a great matter; for the most part of people are so drowned in sin, that they no more feel the same, for sin grieves them no more, according to the saying, "The ungodly man when he entereth into the midst of all sin and mischief, despiseth not the same; he regardeth sin nothing at all, neither is he sorry for it."

But as I said, the first note is, when you know your sins, and feel the same, then are they heavy unto you and grieve you. Then follows the second point, which is faith in Christ; that is, when you believe most steadfastly and undoubtedly, that God our heavenly Father, through his Son, will deliver you from your sins. When you believe, I say, that the blood of our Saviour was shed for you, for the cleansing and putting away of your sins; and believing this most steadfastly with an unfeigned heart, then you have the second point. The third point is, when you have an earnest desire to amendment and hatred against sin, and study to live after God's will and commandments, as much as is possible for you to do, then have you the third point. And when you find these three points to be in you; namely, first, when you know your sin and are sorry for the same, and afterwards believe to be saved through

* The reformers were not always accustomed to state the doctrines of gospel truth with that accuracy which in later times various controversies have rendered necessary; and Latimer especially was too intent on addressing his hearers in a popular and practical manner, to study precision in his expressions. There are many passages in his sermons which give a more correct view of the subject than this. See the preceding page, also pages 110—112, 238, 322, 342, 350, 371—374.

the passion of Jesus Christ: and thirdly, have an earnest desire to leave sin, and to fly the same; when you find these three things in your hearts, then you may be sure that your names are written in the book. And you may be sure also, that you are elect and predestinate to everlasting life.

And again, when you see not your wickedness, and sin grieves you not, neither have you faith or hope in our Saviour, and therefore are careless and study not for amendment of life; then you are in a heavy case, and then you have cause to be sorry, and to lament your wretchedness: for truly you are not in the book of life, but the devil has power over you as long as you are in such a state. Here you see now how you shall try yourselves whether you are in the book of life or not.

"Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." I learn here, that a few words spoken with faith, are better than a long bibble-babble. For right prayer standeth not in many words, or long babbling. Right prayer requires the whole heart, for there is no greater thing in the world than right prayer. For prayer joined with faith, is the instrument wherewith we receive the benefits of God. Now when faith and prayer are joined together, it is impossible but God hears it, for they must needs go together; for else it avails nothing, except faith is joined with it, as Christ said unto the Centurion, "According to thy faith be it unto thee."

Here I might take occasion to speak of prayer, if the time would serve. But to be short; three things may move us to pray. First, the commandment of God, which biddeth us to call upon him in the day of trouble: which commandment hath no less authority than this; "Thou shalt not kill." The self-same God who saith, "Thou shalt not kill;" saith, "Thou shalt pray;" that is, thou shalt call upon me; whereby it appears, that we seem deserving of condemnation when we intermit prayer.

The second cause that should move us is the promise of God; for he promises us every where in the Scripture, that he will hear us when we call upon him; which promise is not to be despised, for he saith, "Ask, and it shall be given you;" "Whatsoever ye shall desire of my Father, in my name, it shall be given unto you." Such promises ought to allure us to pray without intermission.

The third cause is, the example of all the prophets, the

saints of God, that move us thereunto. For Moses, leading the people out of Egypt, after he came to the Red sea, Pharaoh with his power followed at his back, and on both sides there were great hills, and before him the great sea. Then Moses, being in such danger, cried unto God, not speaking many words, but lifting up his heart unto God. Then God said unto him; "Why criest thou?" Here you see that Moses fought only with his prayer against his enemies, so should we fight against our enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil; with earnest and fervent prayer.

Likewise when Joshua was in great distress, because his people had lost the victory, and his enemies had got the upper hand of him—what does he? He cries unto God. So does David the king, as it appears throughout all the psalms: how fervent is he in prayer, giving us an example to follow him!

Thus much I thought good to speak of prayer, to move you thereunto; for I fear there are many of you that little regard the same. All such may learn here to be more diligent and earnest in prayer than they have been, especially considering that it is the commandment of God that we should pray. Also we have great store of the promises of God that we shall be heard: also the example of good and godly men may move us thereunto: for if they found ease with their prayers, we shall find the like.

But now to return to the text, "Christ touched him." Here appears the friendliness and kindness of our Saviour Christ: he is not so proud as the common sort of lords are, that none may speak with them. No, no; he is more friendly; the poor man came to speak with him, and he forthwith came to him and spake with him; wherefore all lords and men in authority need not be ashamed to learn here of our Saviour Christ, to be gentle and meek of spirit to the poor people.

It is also to be considered, that our Saviour did this against the law outwardly; for there was a law that no man should touch a leprous man, yet Christ touched this man. Where you must consider, that civil laws and statutes must be ordered by charity; for this act of Christ was against the words of the law, but not against the law itself. This law was made to that end, that no man should be hurt or defiled by a leper; but Christ touched this man, and was not hurt himself, but cleansed him that was hurt already. And here we learn rather to follow the mind of the law,

than the rigour of the words; and to bring charity with us, which is an interpreter of the law, for else we may miss by extremity.* Further, what meant it that Christ touched him with his hand? And how chanced it that his word and hand went together? Because he would show and declare unto us the profitableness of his flesh, how it was a flesh by which we should all be saved; so that no salvation may be looked for, except by him, and except he is eaten and drunken. (John vi.)

Again, sometimes he healed by his word and divine power only, as it appeareth by the servant of the centurion; to signify unto us, that it was not necessary for us always to have him here bodily. And to assure us of his help without his bodily presence, he said, "It is good for you that I go from you." (John xvi.) And to signify his power, he used the authority of his word, both in his presence and absence: therefore we may be certain that he can and will help us with his divine power when we call upon him, as well absent as present; for he is every where, and will be with us unto the end of the world, as he promised unto his apostles after his resurrection, saying, "Lo, I will be with you until the end of the world;" which is the greatest comfort that may be unto a Christian heart, for it is a stay to all trouble.

We read further, that he sent him to the priest, and commanded him that he should tell no man. What meant he by this?—He would have him not to be his own judge. There was a law that the leprosy should be examined by the priest, and that the priest should give the sentence whether the leper were clean or unclean. Now Christ would not have this man to be his own judge, and to pronounce himself clean; but biddeth him to go to the ordinary. And this he did for two considerations: the first was to convince the Jews of their own wickedness, in that they would not believe in him, but despised and maliced him. Therefore he sent unto them this man, who had been infected with leprosy, so that when they pronounced him clean, they might see their own wickedness and obstinacy, who would not believe, &c. The second cause was, for the observation of the law, and for that he would give none occasion to carnal liberty. He would have every man in his order, as well the magistrates as the subjects; whereby

* Extreme strictness.

we may learn to follow his example, to keep all good laws and orders, and the rather, for that Christ himself kept them.

Here our papists make ado with their auricular confession, trying to prove the same by this place. For they say Christ sent this man unto the priest to fetch there his absolution; and therefore we must go also unto the priest, and after confession receive of him absolution of all our sins. But yet we must take heed, say they, that we forget nothing: for all those sins that are forgotten, may not be forgiven. And so they bind the consciences of men, persuading them that when their sins were all numbered and confessed, it was well. And hereby, they took clean away the passion of Christ. For they made this numbering of sins to be a merit; and so they came at all the secrets that were in men's hearts: so that no emperor or king could say or do, or think any thing in his heart, but they knew it; and so applied all the purposes and intents of princes to their own advantage: and this was the fruit of their auricular confession. But to speak of right and true confession, I would to God it were kept in England, for it is a good thing. And those who find themselves grieved in conscience might go to a learned man, and there obtain of him comfort from the word of God, and so come to a quiet conscience; which is better and more to be regarded than all the riches of the world. And surely, it grieves me much that such confessions are not kept in England.

Now to make an end; you have heard in this gospel of divers things which I will not rehearse. But I would have you to keep in remembrance the great faith which this man had in our Saviour, (which faith restored him to his health again:) and learn by him to believe as he did, that our Saviour will restore unto us the health of soul and body. Also note here, the great love that our Saviour bare unto this man, steadfastly believing that he will be like loving unto thee when thou callest upon him with earnest prayer. For prayer, as I told you, is altogether:* for prayer with faith goeth through the clouds. But it is a great matter to pray, it is *ars artium*, that is, an art above all arts. Let us therefore give ourselves to prayer and godly living, so that his name may be glorified in us, both now and ever. *Amen.*

* All in all.

CHRIST STILLING THE TEMPEST.

A SERMON,

Preached on the 31st of January, the fourth Sunday after the Epiphany, 1553.

MATTHEW viii.

And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him. And behold there arose a tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves; but he was asleep. And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us, we perish. And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the wind and the sea: and there was a great calm.

HERE in this gospel we have a remarkable story, and a wonderful miracle which our Saviour did, being with his disciples upon the sea; which story is written for our doctrine and instruction, that we may comfort ourselves withal, when we are in like trouble in the tempests of this world. For we may learn here many good things, if we consider the story itself, and the circumstances thereof. The evangelist saith that our Saviour, accompanied with his disciples, went into a ship, where he laid himself upon a pillow and slept; which sleep shows his very manhood,* as you shall hear afterward. Now whilst he thus lay asleep, lo there arose suddenly so great a tempest, that they thought they should all have perished; such fearful weather lighted upon them. The disciples being sore astonished at this horrible weather, wist not what to do. At the last they remembering themselves, ran to our Saviour who lay there asleep, crying, "Lord, we perish:" or, else as the evangelist Mark saith, "Lord, carest thou not that we perish?"

* Human nature.

He being awaked, first rebuked them because of their unbelief; after that he rebuked the wind, and commanded the tempest to leave off and cease.

The disciples seeing before the horrible tempest, and now the sudden calmness made through his word, marvelled much; for they never before had seen such things. They had never heard that any man had power to rule the sea and the wind before this time; and therefore they were astonished at it, and said, "O what a man is this, which ruleth with his word the sea and the wind!" This is the sum of this gospel, which contains many good things for our instruction, learning, and comfort.

First, we may learn here, that the ship signified the congregation of Christ and his church. The disciples being in the ship are preserved through Christ; so all those who are in the church of Christ shall be saved and preserved by him. The others, who are without this church, shall be damned and perish.

Learn here also by the example of the disciples of Christ two things. The first, not to presume too much; that is to say, not to stand in your own conceit, thinking yourself to be perfect in faith. Secondly, not to despair because of your imperfections. The disciples thought themselves perfect and strong in faith, before they came into this tempest; but what doth our Saviour? Perceiving their presumption, he sends a tempest to bring them to the knowledge of themselves; and then, they, feeling the weakness of their faith, ran to our Saviour crying for help; whereby every man may learn, not to think too much of himself. And when he feels himself very weak, he may not despair, but run to Christ, as these disciples did; by which, although their heart was weak and feeble, yet were they preserved.

Moreover, we learn here that our Saviour Christ is both very God and very man. His Godhead appeared in that the wind and waters obeyed him, and reformed themselves according to his word. For what king or emperor is in the whole world, that can or may command the wind or seas? None at all: yea, if the whole world should be set together with all their power and wits, they would not be able to do any such thing. Therefore learn here to know the majesty of Christ, his power and stay,* and to believe him to be very God. Secondly, learn here to know his manhood: for the evangelist saith, "He slept;" which

* Strength to support.

signifies his very manhood, and that all things were in him that are in us, except sin; and that he can have compassion with us, for he himself hath been in all miseries and troubles as well as we, as St. Paul testified to the Romans. He slept here for weariness, he ate, he drank, he wept, and in him were all these infirmities, and chiefly for two causes: first, to signify unto us his very manhood: secondly, to comfort us with his example, that when we are in trouble and miseries we might think and know that our Saviour Christ will have compassion upon us; for he himself hath tasted of all trouble, and therefore he will be the more inclined to help and assist us with his Holy Spirit.

Also we may note here, that the disciples of our Saviour had passed many a time before upon the water, and yet they were never so troubled, nor in such danger. What means this—that they are in trouble now, when our Saviour is with them, and never before when they were not with him? For it was no dangerous water, it was but a little pond:* what meaneth it then that this marvellous tempest so suddenly arose? It signifies that all those who believe in Christ, and take his part, and study to live after his will and commandment, and forsake the world and all wickedness, all such, I say, must have much trouble and affliction. For it is the will of God, that those who seek to be saved, shall be proved and tried through the fire of tribulation; as appears here by the disciples, who were never before in such trouble and danger; for they never had what is called "good luck," as the most part of worldlings commonly have, (for all things go well with them, and after their mind,) but as soon as they receive Christ into their ship, that is as soon as they believe in him, and receive his word, they shall have trouble and affliction; whereof we have a great number of examples in the Scriptures, which plainly teach us, not to seek by the gospel good cheer in this world, but rather misery and adversity. But the most part of gospellers are contrary minded; for they seek good cheer and promotion through the gospel, which is a horrible abuse of God's most holy word.

Moses, that excellent prophet of God, as long as he was in Pharaoh's house, he was well: he had all things

* The sea of Galilee is a lake about eighteen miles long and six broad; so that when compared with the sea it was but as a pond.

after his mind: but as soon as God called him to be his minister, and to do him service, all things were turned; that is, all sweet things were made sour, all the great cheer was gone; so that he was compelled by necessity to keep sheep, whereas before he was a prince, and heir of the crown of Egypt. Here you see how God exercises his who appertain to everlasting life.

Also St. Paul, as long as he was without Christ, was in great authority and estimation among the Jews, insomuch that he had letters of authority to afflict and put in prison all those who held to Christ. But after he once came to Christ what had he? Afflictions and miseries plenty, as it appears throughout the Acts of the Apostles, and his Epistles; where also it appears that he had a most irksome and painful life as soon as he came to the knowledge of Christ and his gospel. Also the Israelites as long as they were serving for the most part false gods, they wanted neither meat nor drink: but as soon as they came again to the knowledge of God, they were in great miseries, lacking all manner of necessaries: insomuch that they say, as the prophet reports, "We will turn again to the queen of heaven," &c. (Jer. xliv.)

Now to come to our time: we see daily that they who take part with Christ and his gospel, are most commonly disregarded in this world. The world and they cannot agree together, for they love godliness, and the others love evil; which two can never be set together. But there are very few, God knows, that take part with Christ; for man will rather apply himself after the world, and have quietness and a merry life, than forsake the same, and have trouble with Christ and his flock; but what reward they shall have, will appear in the end.

A man may marvel how God can suffer his people to be so punished and afflicted in this world; and again, the wicked to have ever the upper hand, and to be merry in this world? Because God and the devil are two Lords, most repugnant in conditions.* For God is good, just, merciful and liberal, and kind towards his, offering unto those who live after his will, life everlasting. But the devil is a most wicked minister,† unmerciful and cruel, rewarding his servants with everlasting pain and damnation. Now these Lords have their servants. God suffers his to be much afflicted and plagued, for these three causes.

* Opposite in their nature. † Agent.

The first is, though they are justified before God through the passion of our Saviour, yet a great many sins and imperfections remain within them. Now to put them in remembrance how abominable a thing sin is in the face of God, he sends unto them calamities and miseries, to teach them to beware of sin, and to live upright and holy. Secondly, to teach them to pray and call upon God. And thirdly, to teach us to know ourselves. For when we are in prosperity and health, we think we have faith, and that all things are safe; but when there comes affliction, then our imperfection appears; therefore God sends affliction to verify the saying of St. Peter, "The judgment of God beginneth at the house of God." (1 Pet. iv.) As for the wicked, for the most part, he lets them alone until they come to their death-beds, and then they shall find all their wickedness, and suffer punishment world without end.

By the afflictions of the household of God the power and strength of God appear most plainly: for Christ confounds the devil by his weak members, as it appears daily, how God gives unto such as have his Spirit, power to suffer death for his word's sake; and so he confounds the devil and all his members, as it appeared in John Baptist and Christ himself. For the devil thought that Christ, after he hanged upon the cross, had been destroyed and wholly overcome; but it was quite contrary.

Thus you see the causes wherefore God suffers his people to be in tribulation and affliction. Now when we have affliction, we must pray unto him to take away the same from us, but this prayer must be put conditionally, when it shall please him; as we have example of David the king, who when he was driven out of his kingdom by Absalom his son, said, "If the Lord willeth, let me return." Therefore being in sickness, follow the example of David; call upon God for deliverance conditionally: but above all things, beware of murmuring and rebelling against him; for he will have us obedient to his will and pleasure. The best service you can do, is to take the cross patiently, which God has laid upon you. Some men, when they are sick, say, It grieves my heart that I spend my time so idly; for if I were whole I might do much good. These are much deceived, for they cannot spend their time better, than when they suffer the cross that God has laid upon them, and bear the same willingly and obediently. For, as I said before, it is the best service that we can do to God,

when we bear our afflictions and troubles well and godly, yet we may pray that he will be merciful unto us, and lay no more upon us than we are able to bear, according to his promises.

Also note here, whither the disciples went in necessity? Even to Christ being asleep. We think that he is asleep, if he hear us not so soon as we call upon him; but for all that he sleepeth not. "He that keepeth Israel, neither slumbereth nor sleepeth." He is called "A Helper in due time." But here learn by the example of his disciples, whither thou shalt run in thy distress, namely, to Christ; for he is the right helper, and not unto his saints; for when I call upon any creature, I commit most abominable idolatry. For this is one apparent and great argument to make Christ God, if we call upon him as St. Stephen did; who said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," (Acts vii.:) for invocation declares an omnipotency. So that when I call upon saints I make them omnipotent, and so I make them gods: for omnipotency pertains properly and principally only to God. And therefore beware that you call upon no creature, but upon God only; for if you do the contrary, you do against God most wickedly.

Here is also to be noted, that the very saints of God have but little faith: they have little, but yet they have some; they are not altogether without faith, for they that are altogether without faith are in an evil case; for they are and remain in the kingdom and domination of the devil. The disciples had but a little faith, yet they go and awaken Christ, and desire his help. And here note also that he is not angry for their wakening of him, but he blamed them for their unbelief; which is a very comfortable doctrine for us, that when we feel ourselves weak in faith we should not despair, but rather run to him, for he will increase our faith. Some think themselves to have very much faith, when they have none at all. And again, some think themselves to have none, when they have some; therefore it is needful for us to pray without intermission, "Lord, increase our faith; O Lord, help my unbelief." (Mark ix.)

Here learn by the example of our Saviour, not to flatter any body when they do naughtily and wickedly: for Christ perceiving his disciples to be unbelievers, flattered them not, but told them plainly, and rebuked them for their faults. Also we may here learn not to be too hasty with

our neighbours when they fall, but to bear with them as our Saviour did bear with his disciples. He thrusts them not away because of their unbelief; so we may not give over our neighbour when he is fallen, for he may rise again.

Now to make an end; here learn by the example of these disciples to run to Christ when you are in tribulation. Seek help at his hand, and if you have not a perfect faith, yet despair not, for he is merciful, loving, and kind unto all that call upon him; to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, both now and ever, world without end. Amen.

THE PARABLE OF THE TARES.

A SERMON,

Preached on the 7th of February, 1553.

MATTHEW xiii.

The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way, &c.

THIS is a parable or similitude wherein our Saviour compared the kingdom of God, that is, the preaching of his word, wherein consisteth the salvation of mankind, unto a husbandman who sowed good seed in his field.

But before we come unto the matter, you shall first learn to understand what this word parable, which is a Greek word, and used in the Latin and English tongue, means; that is to say, "A parable is a comparison of two things that are unlike outwardly;" while in effect they signify but one thing, for they appertain to one end; as in this place, Christ compared the word of God unto seed: which two things are unlike, but yet they teach one thing; for like as the seed is sown in the earth, so is the word of God sown in our hearts: and thus much of this word parable.

The sum of this gospel is, first he speaks of a husbandman that sowed good seed; after that he mentions an enemy that sowed evil seed. And these two manner of seeds, that is, the husbandman's seed that was good, and the enemy's seed which was naught, came up both together: so that the enemy was as busy as the other in sowing his evil seed. And while he was busy in sowing it, it was

unknown. And at the first springing up, it all seemed to be good seed, but at length the servant of the husbandman perceived the evil seed sown amongst the good; therefore he came and told his master, showing him all the matter, and required leave to gather the evil seed from amongst the other. The husbandman himself said, "Our enemy hath done this. But for all that, let it alone until the harvest, and then will I separate the good from the evil." This is the sum of this gospel.

First note that he saith, "When every body was asleep, then he came and sowed his seed." Who are these sleepers? The bishops and prelates, the slothful and careless curates and ministers; they with their negligence give the devil leave to sow his seed, for they sow not their seed. That is, they preach not the word of God, they instruct not the people with wholesome doctrine, and so they give place to the devil to sow his seed. For when the devil cometh, and findeth the heart of man not weaponed nor garnished with the word of God, he forthwith possesses the same, and so getteth victory through the slothfulness of the spiritualty, which they shall one day grievously repent. For the whole Scripture, that is to say, both the Old and New Testament, is full of threatenings against such negligent and slothful pastors; and they shall make a heavy and grievous account one day, when no excuse shall serve, but extreme punishment shall follow, for a reward of their slothfulness.

This gospel gives occasion to speak of many things: for our Saviour himself expounded this parable unto his disciples after the people were gone from him, and he was come into the house. For the disciples were not so bold as to ask him of the meaning of this parable in the presence of the people; whereby we may learn good manners, to use in every thing a good and convenient time. Also we may here learn to search and inquire earnestly, and with great diligence, for the true understanding of God's word. And when you hear a sermon and are in doubt of something, inquire about it, and be desirous to learn; for it is written, "Whosoever hath, unto him shall be given; and he shall have abundance." (Matt. xiii.) What means this saying?—When we hear the word of God, and have tasted somewhat thereof, and are afterwards desirous to go forward more and more, then shall we have further knowledge; for God

will give us his grace to come to further understanding. And so the saying of our Saviour shall be fulfilled in us.

Now when our Saviour heard the request of his disciples, he performs their desire, and begins to expound unto them the parable, saying, "I am he that soweth good seed: the adversary, the devil, is he who soweth evil seed." Here our Saviour, good people, makes known that he goeth about to do us good; but the devil doth quite the contrary, and he seeks to spoil and destroy us with his filthy and naughty seed of false doctrine. The field here is the whole world. The harvest is the end of the world. The reapers are the angels of God, who are his servants: for as every lord or master has his servants to wait upon him, and to do his commandments, so the angels of God wait upon Him to do his commandments. The angels at the time of the harvest shall gather first all such as have been evil and have given occasion of wickedness, and go forward in the same without repentance or amendment of their lives. All such, I say, shall be gathered together and cast into the furnace of fire, "where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." For in the end of this wicked world, all such as have lived in the delights and pleasures of the same, and have not fought with the lusts and pleasures of their flesh, but are proud and stubborn, or bear hatred and malice unto their neighbours, or are covetous persons; also all naughty servants that do not their duties, and all those that use falsehood in buying and selling, and care not for their neighbours, but sell unto them false wares, or otherwise deceive them; all these are called "the offenders of this world," and all such shall be cast into the furnace where shall be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

In like manner, all idle persons that will not work for their living, but go about loitering and are chargeable unto others; and also drunken persons that abuse the benefits of God in dishonouring themselves, so that they lose the use of reason, and their natural wits wherewith God has endued them, and make themselves like swine and beasts; also those who break wedlock, and despise matrimony, which is instituted of God himself. Hereunto add all swearers, all usurers, all liars, and deceivers; all these are called the seed of the devil; and so they are the devil's creatures through their own wickedness.

But yet it is true that wicked men have their souls and

bodies of God, for he is their Creator and Maker: but they themselves, in forsaking God and his laws, and following the devil and his instructions, make themselves members of the devil, and become his seed; therefore in the last day they shall be cast out into everlasting fire, when the trumpet shall blow, and the angels shall come and gather all those that offend from among the elect of God.

The form of judgment shall be in this manner: Christ our Saviour at the day of judgment, being appointed of God, shall come down with great triumph and honour, accompanied with all his angels and saints that departed in faith out of this world beforetime: they shall come with him then, and all the elect shall be gathered to him, and there they shall see the judgment; but they themselves shall not be judged, but shall be like as judges with him. After the elect are separated from the wicked, he shall give a most horrible and dreadful sentence unto the wicked, commanding his angels to cast them into everlasting fire, where they shall have such torments as no tongue can express.

Therefore our Saviour, desirous to set out the pains of hell unto us, and to make us afraid thereof, calls it fire, yea, a burning and unquenchable fire. For as there is no pain so grievous to a man as fire is, so the pains of hell pass all the pains that may be imagined by any man. There shall be sobbing and sighing, weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, which are the tokens of unspeakable pains and griefs that shall come upon those that die in the state of damnation. For you must understand that there are but two places appointed by Almighty God, for all mankind, that is, heaven and hell. And in what state soever a man dieth, in the same he shall rise again, for there shall be no alteration or change. Those who die repentant and are sorry for their sins—who cry to God for mercy, are ashamed of their wickedness, and believe with all their hearts that God will be merciful unto them through the passion of our Saviour Christ; those who die in such a faith, shall come into everlasting life and felicity, and shall also rise in the last day in a state of salvation. For look—as you die, so shall you arise. Whosoever departeth out of this world without a repentant heart, and has been a malicious and envious man, and a hater of the word of God, and so continues, and will not repent and be sorry, and call

upon God with a good faith, or has no faith at all; that man shall come to everlasting damnation; and so he shall arise again at the last day. For there is nothing that can help a soul when departed out of its damnation, or hinder it of its salvation.

For when a man dies without faith in Christ, all the masses in the whole world are not able to relieve him; and so to conclude, all the travails that we have had in time past by seeking of remedy by purgatory, and all the great costs and expenses that may be bestowed upon any soul lying in the state of damnation, can avail nothing, neither can it do any good. For as I said before, the judgments of God are immutable, that is—as you die, so shall you rise. If you die in the state of salvation, you shall rise so again, and receive your body, and remain in salvation. Again, if you die in damnation, you shall rise in the same state, and receive your body, and return again to the same state, and be punished world without end, with unspeakable pains and torments. For our natural fire, in comparison to hell-fire, is like a fire painted on a wall; but that shall be so extreme, that no man is able to express the terrible horror and grief thereof.

O what a pitiful thing is it, that man will not consider this, and leave the sin and pleasure of this world, and live godly; but is so blind and mad, that he will rather have a momentary, and a very short and small pleasure, than hearken to the will and pleasure of Almighty God; who can take away everlasting pain and woe, and give unto him everlasting felicity! That a great many of us are damned, the fault is not in God, for "God would have all men be saved." But the fault is in ourselves, and in our own madness, who had rather have damnation than salvation. Therefore, good people, consider these terrible pains in your minds, which are prepared for the wicked and ungodly, avoid all wickedness and sin: set before your eyes the wonderful joy and felicity, and the innumerable treasures which God hath laid up for you that fear and love him, and live after his will and commandments; for no tongue can express, no eye hath seen, no heart can comprehend, nor conceive the great felicity that God hath prepared for his elect and chosen, as St. Paul witnesses. Consider, therefore, I say, these most excellent treasures, and exert yourselves to obtain the fruition of the same.

Continue not, neither abide nor wallow too long in your sins, like as a swine lieth in the mire. Make no delay to repent of your sin, and to amend your life, for you are not so sure to have repentance in the end. It is a common saying, "Late repentance is seldom sincere." Therefore consider this thing with yourself betimes, and study to amend your life: for what avails it to have all the pleasures of the world for a while, and after that to have everlasting pain and infelicity?

Therefore let every one examine his own conscience when he finds himself unready. For all such as through the goodness of God have received faith, and then wrestling with sin, consent not unto it, but are sorry for it when they fall, and do not abide nor dwell in the same, but rise up again forthwith, and call for forgiveness thereof, through the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ—all such are called just: that is to say, all that die with a repentant heart, and are sorry that they have sinned, and are minded if God give them longer time to live, to amend all faults, and lead a new life; then are they just; but not through their own merits or good works. For if God should enter into judgment with us, none are able to stand before his face; neither may any of his saints be found just; neither St. John Baptist, St. Peter, nor St. Paul; no nor is the mother of our Saviour Christ herself just, if she should be judged after the rigour of the law. For all are and must be justified by the justification of our Saviour Christ, and so we must be justified, and not by our own well-doings, but our justice standeth in this, that our unrighteousness is forgiven us through the righteousness of Christ, for if we believe in him, then are we made righteous. For he fulfilled the law, and afterward granted the same to be ours, if we believe that his fulfilling is our fulfilling; for the apostle Saint Paul saith, "He hath not spared his own Son, but hath given him up for us; and how then may it be, but that we should have all things with him?"

Therefore it must needs follow, that when he gave us his only Son, he gave us also his righteousness, and his fulfilling of the law. So that we are justified by God's free gift, and not of ourselves, nor by our merits: but the righteousness of Christ is accounted to be our righteousness, and through the same we obtain everlasting life, and not through our own doings; for, as I said before, if God should enter into judgment with us, we should be damned.

Therefore take heed and be not proud, and be humble and low, and trust not too much in yourselves; but put your only trust in Christ our Saviour. And yet you may not utterly set aside the doing of good works; but especially look that you have always oil in readiness for your lamps, or else you may not come to the wedding, but shall be shut out, and thrust into everlasting darkness. This oil is faith in Christ, which if you lack, then all things are unsavoury before the face of God: but a great many people are much deceived, for they think themselves to have faith when indeed they have it not. Some peradventure will say, How shall I know whether I have faith or not? Truly you shall find this in you, if you have no mind to leave sin; then sin grieves you not, but you are content to go forward in the same, and you delight in it, and hate it not, neither do you feel what sin is: when you are in such a case, then you have no faith, and therefore are like to perish everlastingly. For that man who is sore sick, and yet feels not his sickness, he is in great danger, for he has lost all his senses; so that man who has gone so far in sin, that he feels his sin no more, is like to be damned, for he is without faith.

Again, that man is in good case, who can be content to fight and strive with sin, and to withstand the devil, and his temptations, and calls for the help of God, and believes that God will help him, and make him strong to fight. That man shall not be overcome by the devil. And whosoever feels this in his heart, and so wrestles with sin, may be sure that he has faith, and is in the favour of God.

But if you will have a trial of your faith, then do this—Examine yourself concerning your enemy; he does you harm, he slanders you, or takes away your living from you. How shall you conduct yourself towards such a man? If you can find in your heart to pray for him, to love him with all your heart, and forgive him with a goodwill all that he has sinned against you—if you can find this readiness in your heart, then you are one of those who have faith, if you would have him to be saved as well as yourself. And if you can do this you may argue that your sin is forgiven, and that you are none of those that shall be cast out, but shall be received and placed among the number of the godly, and shall enjoy with them everlasting life. For St. Paul saith, "Those that are just," that is, those that are justified by faith, and

exercise faith in their living and conversation, "they shall shine like unto the sun in the kingdom of God;" that is to say, they shall be in exceeding great honour and glory. For like as the sun exceeds in brightness all other works of God, and is beautiful in the eyes of every man; so shall all the faithful be beautiful and endued with honour and glory: although in this world they are but outcasts, and accounted as "The dross and filth of the world;" but in the other world, when the angels shall gather together the wicked, and cast them into the fire, then shall the elect shine as the sun in the kingdom of God. For no man can express the honour and glory that they shall have, who will be content to suffer all things for God's sake, and reform themselves after his will; or are content to be told of their faults, and glad to amend the same, and humble themselves under the mighty hand of God.

Also the householder said unto his servants, "Let them alone until harvest." Here you may learn that the preachers and ministers of the word of God, have not authority to compel the people with violence to goodness, although they are wicked, But they should admonish them only with the word of God, not pull the wicked out by the throat; for that is not their duty. All things must be done according as God has appointed. God has appointed the magistrates to punish the wicked; for so he saith, "Thou shalt take away the evil from amongst the people, thou shalt have no pity of him." If he be a thief, an adulterer, or a whoremonger, away with him. But when our Saviour saith, "Let them grow;" he speaks not of the civil magistrates, for it is their duty to pull them out; but he signifies that there will be such wickedness in spite of the magistrates, and teaches that the ecclesiastical power is ordained, not to pull out the wicked with the sword, but only to admonish them with the word of God, which is called "The sword of the Spirit." So did John Baptist, saying, "Who hath taught you to flee from the wrath of God that is at hand?"

So did Peter in the Acts of the Apostles; "Whom you have crucified," he said unto the Jews. What follows? "They were pricked in their hearts;" contrition and repentance followed as soon as the word was preached unto them. Therefore they said, "Brethren, what shall we do? How shall we be made clean from our sins, that we may saved? Then he sends them to Christ. So that it appears in this gospel, and by these examples, that the preacher has

no other sword, but the sword of the word of God: with that sword he may strike them. He may rebuke their wicked living, and further he ought not to go. But kings and magistrates have power to punish with the sword the obstinate and vicious livers, and to put them to due punishment.

Now to make an end, with this one lesson, which is, If you dwell in a town where are some wicked men that will not be reformed, nor in anywise amend their lives, as there are commonly some in every town; run not therefore out of the town, but tarry there still, and exercise patience amongst them, exhorting them, whensoever occasion serves, to amendment. And do not as the fondness of the monkery* first did, for they at the first made so great account of the holiness of their good life, that they could not be content to live and abide in cities and towns where sinners and wicked doers were, but thought to amend the matter; and therefore ran out into the wilderness, where they fell into great inconveniences. For some despised the communion of the body and blood of our Saviour Christ, and so fell into other errors, so God punished them for their foolishness and uncharitableness. We are born into this world, not for our own sakes only, but for every Christian's sake. They forgetting this commandment of love and charity, ran away from their neighbours, like beasts and wild horses, that cannot abide the company of men. So there have been some in our time who follow their example, separating themselves from the company of other men, and therefore God gave them a perverted judgment. Therefore when you dwell in any evil town or parish, follow not these examples; but remember that Lot, dwelling in the midst of Sodom, was nevertheless preserved from the wrath of God, and such will be preserved in the midst of the wicked. But for all that, you must not flatter them in their evil doings and naughty livings, but rebuke their sins and wickedness, and in nowise consent unto them. Then it will be well with you here in this world, and in the world to come you shall have life everlasting: which grant both to you and me, God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

* Folly of the monks.

THE

PARABLE OF THE HOUSEHOLDER.

A SERMON,

Preached on the Sunday called Septuagesima, 1553.

MATTHEW XX.

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that was an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

THIS parable is written by the evangelist Matthew in the twentieth chapter, and is very dark and hard to be understood; yea, there is no harder piece of Scripture written by any evangelist. Therefore it may well be called hard meat; not meat for mowers nor ignorant people, who are not exercised in the word of God. And yet there is no other diversity between this Scripture and any other. For though many Scriptures have diverse expositions, (as is well to be allowed of, so long as they keep in the tenour of the catholic faith,*) yet they pertain all to one end and effect, and they are all alike. Therefore although this parable is harder to understand than the others at the first hearing or reading, yet when we well advise and consider the same, we shall find it agreeable unto all the others. . . . . .

Now to the principal cause, and to which our Saviour had respect in this parable, and that is, he teaches us hereby that all Christian people are equal in all things appertaining to the kingdom of Christ. So that we have one Christ, one Redeemer, one baptism, and one gospel, one Supper of the Lord, and one kingdom of heaven. So that the poorest man and most miserable that is in the world,

* Universal faith.

may call God his Father, and Christ his Redeemer, as well as the greatest king or emperor in the world. And this is the scope of this parable, wherein Christ teacheth us this equality. And if this is considered, the whole parable will be easily and soon understood.*

Here is declared unto us that some laboured the whole day, which are hired for a penny, that is of our money ten pence: for like as we have a piece of money which we call a shilling, and is in value twelve pence, so the Jews had a piece that they called *denarius*, and that was in value ten of our pence. The first company wrought twelve hours, and the others wrought, some nine hours, some six hours, some three hours, and some but one hour. Now when evening was come, and the time of payment drew on, the householder said to his steward, Go, and give to every man alike, and begin at those that came last. And when the others that came early in the morning perceived that they should have no more than those that had wrought but one hour, they murmured against the householder, saying, "Shall they which have laboured but one hour, have as much as we that have wrought the whole day?" The householder, perceiving their discontented mind, said to one of them, "Friend, wherefore grudgest thou? Is it not lawful for me to do with mine own what pleaseth me? Have I not given thee what I promised thee? Content thyself therefore, and go thy way, for it hath pleased me to give unto this man which hath wrought but one hour as much as unto thee." This is the sum of this parable, which Christ concludes with this sentence, "The first shall be the last, and the last first."

First consider who are these murmurers? The meritmongers, who esteem their own works so much, that they think heaven scarcely sufficient to recompense their good deeds; namely, for putting themselves to pain with saying of our lady's psalter, and gadding on pilgrimage, and such like trifles. These are the murmurers; for they think themselves holier than all the world, and therefore worthy to receive a greater reward than all other men. But such men are much deceived and are in a false opinion, and if they abide and continue therein, it shall bring them to the fire of hell. For man's salvation cannot be gotten by any work: because the Scripture saith, "Life everlasting is

* It should be observed that other commentators have taken other views of the meaning of this parable.

the gift of God." (Rom. vi.) True it is, that God requires good works of us, and commands us to avoid all wickedness. But for all that, we may not do our good works that we should get heaven withal; but rather to show ourselves thankful for what Christ hath done for us, who with his sufferings hath opened heaven to all believers, that is, to all those that put their hope and trust, not in their deeds, but in his death and suffering, and study to live well and godly; and yet not to make merits of their own works, as though they should have everlasting life for them; as our monks and friars, and all our religious persons were wont to do, and therefore may rightly be called murmurers; for they thought they had so great a store of merits that they sold some of them unto other men. And many men spend a great part of their substance to buy their merits, and to be a brother of their houses, or to obtain one of their coats or cowls to be buried in.

But there is a great difference between the judgment of God, and the judgment of this world. In this world they were accounted most holy above all men, and so most worthy to be first; but before God they shall be last, when their hypocrisy and wickedness shall be opened. And thus much I thought to say of murmurers.

Now I will not apply all the parts of this parable; for, as I said before, it is enough for us if we know the chief point and scope of the parable, which is, that there shall be an equality in all the things that appertain to Christ: insomuch, that the ruler of this realm hath no better a God, no better sacraments, and no better gospel, than the poorest in the world; yea, the poorest man hath as good right to Christ and his benefits, as the greatest man in this world.

This is comfortable to every one, and especially to such as are in misery, poverty, or other calamities; which if it were well considered, would not make us so desirous to come aloft, and to get riches, honour and dignities in this world, as we now are, nor yet so malicious one against another as we are. For then we should ever make this reckoning with ourselves, each man in his vocation; the servant would think thus with himself, I am a poor servant, and must live after the pleasure of my master, I may not have my free will; but what then? I am sure that I have as good a God as my master hath; and I am sure that my service and business pleases God as much, when

I do it with a good faith, as the preachers and curates, in preaching or saying of service. For we must understand that God esteems not the diversity of the works, but he hath respect unto the faith; for a poor man who does his duty in faith, is as acceptable unto God, and hath as good right to the death and merits of Christ, as the greatest man in the world.

So go through all states of men, whosoever applieth to his business with faith, considering that God willeth him so to do, surely the same is most beloved of God. If this were well considered and printed in our hearts, all ambition and desire of promotion, all covetousness, and other vices, would depart out of our hearts. For it is the greatest comfort that may be unto poor people, especially such as are nothing regarded in this world—if they consider that God loves them as well as the richest in the world—it must needs be a great comfort unto them.

But there are some that say, that this sentence, "The first shall be last," is the very substance of the parable. And here you shall understand, that our Saviour Christ took occasion to put forth this parable, when there came a young man demanding of him, "What shall I do to come to everlasting life?" Our Saviour, after he had taught him the commandments of God, bade him, "Go, and sell all that he had, and give to the poor; and come and follow him." He hearing this, went away heavily, for his heart was cold. And then our Saviour spake very terribly against rich men, saying, "It is more easy for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven:"—a camel, or as some think a great cable of a ship, which is more likely than the beast that is called a camel. The disciples hearing this, said, "Who then can be saved?" He made them answer, saying, "God is almighty, and that which is impossible to men, is possible with God;" signifying, that he condemns not all rich men, but only those who set their heart upon riches, who care not how they get them, and when they have them, who abuse them to the satisfying of their own carnal appetites and fleshly delights and pleasures, and use them not to the honour of God.

And again, such riches as are justly, rightly, and godly gotten, those are the good creatures of God, when rightly used to the glory of God, and comfort of their neighbours; not hoarding nor heaping them up, to make treasures of

them. For riches are not evil of themselves; but they are made evil, when our heart is set upon them, and we put hope in them; for that is an abominable thing before the face of God. Now after these words spoken by our Saviour Christ, Peter came forth, saying, "Lo, we have forsaken all that we had, what shall be our reward?" Peter had forsaken all that he had, which was but little in substance, but yet it was a great matter to him, for he had no more than that little: like the widow who cast into the treasury two mites, yet our Saviour praised her gift above all that gave before her. Here thou learnest, that when thou hast but little, yet give of the same little; for it is as acceptable unto God, as though it were a greater thing.

So Peter, in forsaking his old boat and net, was allowed* as much before God, as if he had forsaken all the riches in the world; therefore he shall have a great reward for his old boat; for Christ saith, that he shall be one of them that shall sit and judge the twelve tribes of Israel; and to signify them to be more than others, he giveth them the name of judges; meaning, that they shall condemn the world: like as God speaketh of the queen of Sheba, that in the last day she shall arise and condemn the Jews who would not hear Christ, and she came so great a journey to hear the wisdom of Solomon. Then he answered and said, "Whosoever leaveth father, or mother, or brethren, for my sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life." Now what is this, to leave father and mother? When my father or mother would hinder me in any goodness, or would persuade me from the honouring of God and faith in Christ, then I must forsake and rather lose the favour and good will of my father and mother, than forsake God and his holy word.

And now Christ saith, "The first shall be last, and the last shall be first," alluding to St. Peter's saying, which sounded as though Peter looked for a reward for his deeds; and that is it, which is the let of altogether,† if a man come to the gospel and hears the same, and afterwards looks for a reward, such a man shall be "the last." If these sayings were well considered by us, surely we should not have such a number of vain gospellers as we now have, who seek nothing but their own advantage under the name and colour of the gospel. Moreover, he teaches us to be meek and lowly, and not to think much of ourselves; for those that

* Approved. † Greatest or entire hinderance.

are greatly esteemed in their own eyes, are the least before God: "For he that humbleth himself shall be exalted;" according to the Scripture, which saith, "God resisteth the proud, and advanceth the humble and meek." And this is what he saith, "The first shall be the last," teaching us to be careful and not to stand in our own conceit, but ever to mistrust ourselves; as St. Paul teacheth, saying, "Whosoever standeth let him take heed he fall not; and therefore we may not put trust in ourselves, but rather in God."

Further, in this saying of our Saviour is comprehended a great comfort; for those that are accounted by the world to be the vilest slaves and most abject, may by this saying have a hope to be made the first and the principal; for although they are ever so low, yet they may rise again, and become the highest. And so this is to us a comfortable sentence, which strengthens our faith, and keeps us from desperation and falling from God. And at the end he saith, "Many are called, but few are chosen." These words of our Saviour are very hard to understand, and therefore it is not good to be too curious in them, as some vain fellows, who seeking carnal liberty, pervert, toss and turn the word of God, after their own mind and purpose. Such, I say, when they read these words, make their reckoning thus; saying, "What need I to mortify my body with abstaining from all sin and wickedness? I perceive God hath chosen some, and some are rejected. Now if I be in the number of the chosen, I cannot be damned; but if I be accounted among the condemned number, then I cannot be saved: for God's judgments are immutable." Such foolish and wicked reasons some have; which bring them either to desperation, or else to carnal liberty. Therefore, it is as needful to beware of such reasons, or expositions of the Scripture, as it is to beware of the devil himself.

But if thou art desirous to know whether thou art chosen to everlasting life, thou mayest not begin with God: for God is too high, thou canst not comprehend him; the judgments of God are unknown to man: therefore thou mayest not begin there: but begin with Christ, and learn to know Christ, and wherefore he came; namely, that he came to save sinners, and made himself subject to the law, and a fulfiller of the same, to deliver us from the wrath and danger thereof, and therefore was crucified for our sins, and rose again to show and teach us the way to heaven, and by his resurrection to teach us to arise from

sin: so also his resurrection teaches and admonishes us of the general resurrection. He sitteth at the right hand of God and maketh intercession for us, and gives us the Holy Ghost, that comforts and strengthens our faith, and daily assures us of our salvation.

Consider, I say, Christ and his coming; and then begin to try thyself whether thou art in the book of life or not. If thou findest thyself in Christ, then thou art sure of everlasting life. If thou be without him, then thou art in an evil case. For it is written, "No man cometh unto the Father but through me." Therefore if thou knowest Christ, then thou mayest know further of thy election. But when we are about this matter, and are troubled within ourselves, whether we are elect or no; we must ever have this maxim, or principal rule before our eyes; namely, that God beareth a good-will towards us; God loveth us; God beareth a fatherly heart towards us.

But you will say, "How shall I know that? Or how shall I believe that?" We may know God's will towards us through Christ: God hath opened himself unto us by his Son Christ; for so saith John the Evangelist, "The Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath revealed." (John i.)

Therefore we may perceive his good-will and love towards us; he hath sent his Son into this world, who suffered a most painful death for us. Shall I now think that God hates me? Or shall I doubt of his love towards me? Here you see how you shall avoid the scrupulous and most dangerous question of the predestination of God. For if thou wilt inquire his counsels, and enter into his consistory, thy wit* will deceive thee; for thou shalt not be able to search the counsels of God. But if thou begin with Christ, and consider his coming into the world, and dost believe that God hath sent him for thy sake, to suffer for thee, and deliver thee from sin, death, the devil, and hell; then when thou art so armed with the knowledge of Christ, then, I say, this simple question cannot hurt thee; for thou art in the book of life, which is Christ himself.

Also we learn by this sentence, "Many are called," that the preaching of the gospel is universal; that it pertains to all mankind; that it is written, "Through the whole earth their sound is heard." Now seeing that the gospel is universal, it appears that he would have all man-

* Understanding.

kind saved, and that the fault is not in him if we are damned. For it is written thus, "God would have all men to be saved:" his salvation is sufficient to save all mankind, but we are so wicked of ourselves that we refuse the same, for we will not take it when it is offered unto us; and therefore he saith, "Few are chosen;" that is, few have pleasure and delight in it; for the most part are weary of it, they cannot abide it. And there are some that hear it, but they will not abide any danger for it, they love their riches and possessions more than the word of God. And therefore few are elected, there are but a few that stick heartily unto it, and can find in their hearts to forego this world for God's sake and his holy word.

There are some now-a-days that will not be reprehended by the gospel; they think themselves better than it. Some again are so stubborn, that they will rather forswear themselves, than confess their sins and wickedness. Such men are the cause of their own damnation; for God would have them saved, but they refuse it; like as did Judas the traitor, whom Christ would have had to be saved, but he refused his salvation; he refused to follow the doctrine of his master Christ. And so, whosoever heareth the word of God, and follows it, the same is elect by him. And again, whosoever refuses to hear the word of God, and to follow the same, is damned. So that our election is sure if we follow the word of God.

Here is now taught you how to try out your election, namely, in Christ, for Christ is the accounting book and register of God; even in the same book, that is, Christ, are written all the names of the elect. Therefore we cannot find our election in ourselves, neither yet in the high counsel of God; for "Secret things belong to the most High." (Deut. xxix.) Where then shall I find my election? In the counting book of God, which is Christ; for thus it is written, "God hath so entirely loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, to that end, that all that believe in him should not perish, but have life everlasting." Whereby appears most plainly that Christ is the book of life, and that all that believe in him are in the same book, and so are chosen to everlasting life; for only those are ordained which believe.

Therefore when thou hast faith in Christ, then thou art in the book of life, and so art thou sure of thine election. And again, if thou art without Christ, and have no faith

in him, neither art sorry for thy wickedness, nor have a mind and purpose to leave and forsake sin, but rather exercise and use the same, then thou art not in the book of life as long as thou art in such a case; and therefore shalt thou go into everlasting fire, namely, if thou die in thy wickedness and sin, without repentance.

But there are none so wicked but he may have a remedy. What is that? Enter into thine own heart, and search the secrets of the same. Consider thine own life, and how thou hast spent thy days. And if thou find in thyself all manner of uncleanness and abominable sins, and so seest thy damnation before thine eyes, what shalt thou then do? Confess the same unto the Lord thy God. Be sorry that thou hast offended so loving a Father, and ask mercy of him in the name of Christ, and believe steadfastly that he will be merciful unto thee in respect of his only Son, who suffered death for thee; and then have a good purpose to leave all sin and wickedness, and to withstand and resist the affections of thine own flesh, which ever fight against the Spirit; and to live uprightly and godly, after the will and commandment of thy heavenly Father. If thou go thus to work, surely thou shalt be heard. Thy sins shall be forgiven thee; God will show himself true in his promise, for to that end he sent his only Son into this world, that he might save sinners. Consider therefore, I say, wherefore Christ came into this world; consider also the great hatred and wrath that God beareth against sin; and again consider his great love, showed unto thee, in that he sent his only Son to suffer most cruel death, rather than that thou shouldest be damned everlastingly.

Consider therefore this great love of God the Father, amend thy life, fly all occasions of sin and wickedness, and be loth to displease him. And in doing this thou mayest be assured that though thou hadst done all the sins of the world, they shall neither hurt nor condemn thee; for the mercy of God is greater than all the sins of the world. But we sometimes are in such a case that we think we have no faith at all, or if we have any, it is very feeble and weak. And therefore these are two things; to have faith and to have the feeling of faith. For some men would fain have the feeling of faith, but they cannot attain unto it: and yet they may not despair, but go

forward in calling upon God, and it will come at length: God will open their hearts, and let them feel his goodness.

And thus may you see who are in the book of life, and who are not. For all those that are obstinate sinners, are without Christ, and so not elect to everlasting life, if they remain in their wickedness. There are none of us all but we may be saved by Christ, and therefore let us stick hard unto it, and be content to forego all the pleasures and riches of this world for his sake, who for our sake forsook all the heavenly pleasures, and came down into this miserable and wretched world, and here suffered all manner of afflictions for our sake. And therefore it is right that we should do somewhat for his sake, to show ourselves thankful unto him; and so we may assuredly be found among the first, and not among the last; that is to say, among the elect and chosen of God, that are written in the counting book of God, who are those that believe in Christ Jesus; to whom, with God the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

Extract from the Sermon on Repentance, preached on the first Sunday in Advent, 1550.

How can we be so foolish as to set so much by this world, knowing that it shall endure but a little while? . . Therefore let us remember that the time is very short, let us study to amend our lives, let us not be so careful for this world, for the end of it, no doubt, is at hand; and though the general day* come not yet, our end will not be far off, death will come one day and strip us of our coat, he will take his pleasure of us. It is a marvellous thing to see, there are some who have lived in this world forty or fifty years, and yet they lack time; when death comes they are not ready. But I require you, for God's sake—rise up from your sleep of sin and wickedness; make yourselves ready, set all things in order, so that you may be ready whensoever death shall come and fetch you; for die we must, there is no remedy; we must one day leave this world; for we are not created of God that we should abide here always.

Therefore let us repent in time of our wicked life; for God willeth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he shall turn from his wickedness and live. "As truly as I live, saith God, I will not the death of a sinner, but rather that he shall turn from his wickedness and live." (Ezek. xviii.) These are most comfortable words; for now we may be sure, that when we will leave our sins and wickedness, and turn unto him with all our hearts earnestly, then he will turn himself unto us, and will show himself a loving father. And to the intent that we should believe this, he sweareth an oath—we ought to believe God without an oath, yet he sweareth to make us more sure. What will he have us to do? Truly, to rise up from this sleep of sin, to leave wickedness, to forsake all hatred and malice, that we have had towards our neighbours, to turn from envying, from stealing, and make restitution; from slothfulness, to diligence and painfulness; from gluttony and drunkenness, to soberness and abstinence; from chambering and filthy living, to an honest and pure life. And so finally from all kinds of vices, to virtue and godliness. And whatsoever hath been in times past, to be sorry for it, cry to God for mercy, believe in Christ, and rise up from

* Of judgment.

sleep—do no more wickedly, but live as God would have thee to live.

Extract from the Sermon preached before the Convocation of the Clergy, June 9, 1536.

Christ is man, seeing that he is God and man. He is rich not only in mercy, but in all kinds of riches; for it is he that giveth to us all things abundantly. It is he of whose hand we received both our lives, and other things necessary for the conservation of the same. What man hath any thing, I pray you, but he hath received it of his plentifulness? To be short, it is he that "openeth his hand, and filleth all beasts with his blessing," and not only giveth unto us in most ample wise his benèdiction. Neither can his treasure be spent, how much soever he layeth out: how much soever we take of him, his treasure remaineth still, ever taken, never spent.

Extract from the Sermon preached on Twelfth-day, 1553.

Christ was circumcised, and kept the law to deliver us from the condemnation of it; for if he had not kept the law, the law had such power, that it would have condemned us all; for so it is written, "Cursed be he that abideth not by all that which is written in the law." So that the least cogitation which we have against the law of God, brings this curse upon our heads; so that there never was a man, nor shall be one, that could remedy himself by this law, for it is spiritual, it may not be fulfilled but by the Spirit. It requires us to be clean from all spot of sin, from all ill thoughts, words, and deeds; but we are carnal, and as St. Paul saith, "sold under sin and wickedness." Therefore he concludeth thus: "And by the works of the law no man can be justified." For you must consider the works of the law how they ought to be done, and again, how we do them. As Christ did them, they merit, for he did them perfectly, as they ought to be done; but as we do them, they condemn, and yet the lack is not in the law, but in us.

The law of itself is holy and good, but we are not able to keep it, and therefore we must seek our righteousness

not in the law, but in Christ, who hath fulfilled the same, and given us freely his fulfilling.

And this is the chief cause wherefore Christ would fulfil the law. But all the papists think themselves to be saved by the law, and I myself have been of that dangerous, perilous, and damnable opinion, till I was thirty years of age: so long I walked in darkness, and in the shadow of death. And no doubt he that departeth out of this world in that opinion, shall never come to heaven. For when we consider the works of the law, which the law requires, and again, how we do them, we shall find that we may not be justified by our doings; for the flesh reigneth in us, it beareth rule and hindereth the Spirit, and so we never fulfil the law. Certain it is that those who believe in Christ have the Holy Ghost who ruleth and governeth them; yet for all that there are a great many lacks* in them, so that if they would go about to be saved by their works, they would come too short, for their works are not able to answer the requests of the law. And so Christ should be but a Judge, who should give to every one according to his merits, and should not deserve for us. If we had no other help but that, then we should all go to the devil; but the everlasting God be praised, we have a remedy and a sure helper. Christ the Son of the living God, hath fulfilled the law for us, to deliver us from sin. Such is the office of Christ, to deliver us from the law, and the wrath of it. The law requires a perfect righteousness and holiness; now all those who believe in Christ are holy and righteous, for he hath fulfilled the law for us which believe in him: we are reputed just through faith in Christ. What does the law require of us? Truly, righteousness and holiness. This we have, we are righteous, but how? not by our works, for our works are not able to make us just,† and deliver us from our sins, but we are just by this, that our sins are pardoned unto us, through the faith which we have in Christ our Saviour; for he, through his fulfilling of the law, took away the curse of the law from our heads. "He took away the power of the sin." Sin is made no sin.

I desire you in the reverence of God to bear away this one sentence which I will now speak unto you, for it shall be a good stay for you against the temptations of the devil. The sentence is this, "That which the law could

* Deficiencies, things wanting. † Righteous.

not do," (for it was hindered by the flesh.) But what can the law do when it hath no hinderance? It can justify—that is to say, "by the infirmity of our flesh" man was not able to do it, the lack was in us; for we are wicked, and the law is holy and good. Now that which we lacked, that same has God fulfilled and supplied; for he hath sent his Son to supply that which man's works could not do, and with his fulfilling of the law, and painful death, he merited that as many as believe in him, though they had done all the sins of the world, yet should they not be damned, but they are righteous before the face of God, believing in Christ; so that remission of sins and everlasting life may be sought no where else but only in Christ. "He that spared not his only Son, but gave him for us, why should he not with him give us all things also?" (Rom. viii.)

By this text it appears, that he who hath Christ, hath all things; he hath Christ's fulfilling of the law, he hath remission of his sins, and so consequently everlasting life. Is not this a comfort? What greater consolation, comfort, and heart's-ease can there be in heaven and earth, than this, namely, to be sure of the remission of thy sins, and that Christ bound himself unto the law, that he might fulfil it to the uttermost? This, I say, is the greatest comfort, specially when the devil goeth about to cast our sins in our teeth, and no doubt he forgets them not, but hath them, as they say, at his fingers'-end; as thus, when he will so go to work with us, saying, "Sirrah, thou art damned, thou art a sinful wicked fellow, thou hast not kept God's commandments; God must needs judge thee according unto his law."

Now then, when I have the grace to have in remembrance the circumcision of Christ, when I remember that Christ hath fulfilled the law for me—that he was circumcised—that he will stand between me and my damnation, when I look not upon my works to be saved by them, but only by Christ; when I stick unto him, when I believe that my soul is washed and made clean through his blood, then I have all his goodness, for God hath given him unto me; and when I believe in him, I apply all his benefits unto me.

I pray God the Almighty to give every one of us such a heart that we may believe in him; for he is "the end of the law, the fulfilling of the same, to the salvation of all

that believe on him." What can be more comfortable? Therefore let us believe in him and be thankful.

Now I must needs speak a word or two of good works, lest peradventure some of you be offended with me. I told you before wherein standeth our righteousness, namely in this, that our unrighteousness is forgiven us; for we must needs confess, that the best works which we do, have need of remission of sins, and so are not meritorious, for they are not perfect as they ought to be; and therefore we live by borrowing—we have no proper righteousness of our own; but we borrow, that is to say, we take the righteousness of Christ, which he offered freely to as many as believe in him. And this treasure of his righteousness is not wasted or spent; he hath enough for all the world, yea, if there were a thousand worlds. Therefore when we have been wicked, let us be sorry for our wickedness, and come to Christ, and call for forgiveness, and then take a good earnest purpose to leave sin.

There is a common saying amongst us here in England, "Every thing is as it is taken;" which indeed is not so; for every thing is as it is, howsoever it be taken: but in some manner of things it is true, as in this matter. We of ourselves are unjust, our works are imperfect, and so are disagreeable unto God's laws; yet for Christ's sake we are taken for just, and our works are allowable before God; not that they are so indeed for themselves, but they are taken well for his sake. God hath a pleasure in our works, though they are not so perfectly done as they ought to be, yet they please him, and he delighteth in them, and he will reward them in everlasting life. We have them not by our merits, but by Christ. And yet this sentence is true, "He will reward every one according to his deserving;" he will reward our good works *in* everlasting life, but not *with* everlasting life, for our works are not so much worth, nor ought to be esteemed so as to get us heaven; for it is written, "The kingdom of heaven is the gift of God." So likewise St. Paul saith, "Ye are saved freely without works." (Ephes. ii. 8.) Therefore when ye ask, Are ye saved? say, Yes. How? Why, gratis—freely; and here is all our comfort to stay our consciences. You will say now, Here is all Faith, Faith, but we hear nothing of good works; as some carnal people make such carnal reasons to please themselves; but I tell you we are bound

to walk in good works; for to that end we are come to Christ, to leave sin, to live uprightly, and so to be saved by him; but you must be sure to what end you must work, you must know how to esteem your good works. As if I fast and give alms, and think to be saved by it, I thrust Christ out of his seat: what am I the better when I do so? But I will tell you how you shall do them. First, consider with yourselves how God hath delivered you out of the hands of the devil. Now to show yourselves thankful, and in consideration that he commands you to do good works, you must do them, and thereby we wrestle with sin. When the devil tempts me, or in any way moves me to wickedness, then I must withstand, and reprove it; and when he hath gotten at any time the victory, we must rise again, and be more wary afterwards. And when thou feelest thyself feeble and weak, then call upon God, for he hath promised that he will help: there was never a man yet, nor ever shall be, but he either hath or shall find ease and comfort at God's hand, if he call upon him with a faithful heart. For as St. Paul saith, "God is true, he will not suffer us to be tempted above our strength." (1 Cor. x.) If therefore we would once enter into a practice to overcome the devil, it were an easy thing for us to do it; if every one in his calling would direct his ways to Godward, and to do good works; as the parents in their calling to live quietly and godly together, and to bring up their youth in godliness; so likewise masters should show good examples, to keep their servants from idleness and wickedness. These are good works, when every one doth his calling, as God hath appointed him to do; but they must be done to show ourselves thankful, and therefore they are called in Scripture sacrifices of thanksgiving, not to win heaven withal. For if we should do so, we should deny Christ our Saviour, despise and tread him under our feet. For to what purpose suffered he, if I shall with my good works merit heaven? as the papists, who deny him indeed, for they think to get heaven with their pilgrimages, and with running hither and thither. I pray you note this, we must first be made good, before we can do good; we must first be made just, before our works please God; for when we are justified by faith in Christ, and are made good by him, then cometh our duty, that is, to do good works, to make a declaration of our thankfulness.

GODLY LETTERS

OF

DOCTOR HUGH LATIMER,

BISHOP AND MARTYR.

GODLY LETTERS

OF

DOCTOR HUGH LATIMER.

I.

The Letter of M. Latimer, written to King Henry, for the restoring again the free liberty of reading the Holy Scriptures.

To the most mighty prince, king of England, Henry the Eighth, grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, by our Lord Jesus Christ.

The holy doctor St. Augustine, in an epistle which he wrote to Casulanus, saith, that he who for fear of any power hides the truth, provokes the wrath of God to come upon him, for he fears men more than God. And the holy man St. John Chrysostom saith, that he is not only a traitor to the truth who openly for truth teaches a lie, but he also who does not freely pronounce and show the truth that he knows. These sentences (most redoubted king) when I read now of late, and marked them earnestly in the inward parts of my heart; they made me sore afraid, troubled, and vexed me grievously in my conscience, and at the last drove me to this strait, that either I must show forth such things as I have read and learned in Scripture, or else be of those who provoke the wrath of God upon them, and are traitors unto the truth; the which rather than it should happen, I had rather suffer extreme punishment.

For what else is being a traitor unto the truth, than to be a traitor and a Judas unto Christ, who is the very truth and cause of all truth, who saith, that whosoever denies him here before men, he will deny him before his Father in heaven. Which denying ought more to be feared and dreaded, than the loss of all temporal goods, honour, promotion, fame, prison, slander, hurts, banishment, and all manner of torments and cruelties, yea, and death itself, be it ever so shameful and painful. But,

alas! how little do men regard those sharp sayings of these two holy men! and how little do they fear the terrible judgment of Almighty God, and especially they who boast themselves to be guides and captains to others, and challenge unto themselves the knowledge of Holy Scripture, yet will neither show the truth themselves (as they are bound) nor suffer them that would. So that unto them may be said what our Saviour Christ said to the Pharisees, Matt. xxiii., "Woe be unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, which shut up the kingdom of heaven before men, and neither will you enter in yourselves, neither suffer them that would, to enter in." And they will as much as in them lies, debar not only the word of God, which David calls "a light to direct and show every man how to order his affections and lusts" according to the commandments of God; but also by their subtle wiliness they instruct, move, and provoke, in a manner, all kings in Christendom to aid, succour, and help them in this their mischief. And especially in this your realm, they have sore blinded your liege people and subjects with their laws, customs, ceremonies, and Banbury glosses,* and punished them with cursings, excommunications, and other corruptions, (corrections, I would say,) and now at the last, when they see that they cannot prevail against the open truth, (which the more it is persecuted, the more it increases through their tyranny,) they have made it treason to your noble grace for any to have the Scripture in English.

Here I beseech your grace to pardon me awhile, and patiently to hear me a word or two: yea, and though it be so that as concerning your high majesty and regal power, whereunto Almighty God hath called your grace, there is great difference between you and me, as between God and man. For you are to me and to all your subjects, in God's stead, to defend, aid, and succour us in our right, and so I should tremble and quake to speak to your grace. But again, as concerning that you are a mortal man, in danger of sin, having in you the corrupt nature of Adam, in which all we are both conceived and born, so you have no less need of the merits of Christ's passion for your salvation, than I and other of your subjects have, who all are members of the mystical body of Christ. And though you are a higher member, yet you must not disdain the lesser. For as St. Paul saith, "Those members that be taken most vilest and had in least reputation, are as neces-

* Deceitful explanations.

sary as the other for the preservation and keeping of the body." This, most gracious king, when I considered, and also your favourable and gentle nature, I was bold to write this rude, homely, and simple letter unto your grace, trusting that you will accept my true and faithful mind even as it is.

First and before all things, I will exhort your grace to mark the life and process* of our Saviour Christ and his apostles in preaching and setting forth of the gospel, and to note also the words of our master Christ, which he spoke to his disciples when he sent them forth to preach his gospel, and added to these ever have in your mind the golden rule of our master Christ, "The tree is known by the fruit." For by the diligent marking of these, your grace shall clearly know and perceive who are the true followers of Christ and teachers of his gospel, and who are not. And concerning the first, all Scripture shows plainly that our Saviour Jesus Christ's life was very poor.

Begin at his birth, and I beseech you, who ever heard of a poorer or so poor as he was? It were too long to write how poor Joseph and the blessed virgin Mary took their journey from Nazareth toward Bethlehem, in the cold and frosty winter, having nobody to wait upon them, but he both master and man, and she both mistress and maid. How vilely, thinks your grace, were they treated in the inns and lodgings by the way! and in how vile and abject a place was this poor maid, the mother of our Saviour Jesus Christ, brought to bed, without company, light, or any other thing necessary for a woman in that plight! Was not here a poor beginning, as concerning the world? Yes, truly. And, according to this beginning, was the process and end of his life in this world, and yet he might by his godly power have had all the goods and treasures of this world at his pleasure, when and where he would.

But this he did to show us that his followers and vicars should not regard nor set by the riches and treasures of this world, but after the saying of David we ought to take them, who saith thus: "If riches, promotions, and dignity happen to a man, let him not set his affiance, pleasure, trust, and heart upon them." So that it is not against the poverty in spirit, which Christ praises in the gospel of St. Matthew, chapter v., to be rich, to be in dignity and in honour, if their hearts are not fixed and set

* Proceedings.

upon them so much, that they neither care for God nor good men. But they are enemies to this poverty in spirit, have they ever so little, that have greedy and desirous minds to the goods of this world, only because they would live after their own pleasure and lusts. And they also are secret enemies (and so much the worse) which have professed, as they say, wilful poverty, and will not be called worldly men. And they have lords' lands and kings' riches; yea, rather than they would lose one jot of that which they have, they will cause debates between king and king, realm and realm, yea, between the king and his subjects, and cause rebellion against the temporal power, to which our Saviour Christ himself obeyed and paid tribute, as the gospel declares: unto whom the holy apostle St. Paul teaches every Christian man to obey. Yea, and beside all this, they will curse and ban as much as in them lies, even into the deep pit of hell, all that gainsay their appetite, or do any thing whereby they think their goods, promotions, or dignities should decay.

Your grace may see what means and craft the spiritualty (as they will be called) imagine, to break and withstand the acts which were made in your grace's last parliament against their superfluities. Wherefore your grace may know those that do thus are not true followers of Christ. And although I said the spiritualty are corrupt with this unthrifty ambition, yet I mean not that all are faulty therein, for there are some good among them. Neither would I that your grace should take away the goods due to the church, but take away all evil persons from the goods, and set better in their stead.

I name or point out no person or persons, but remit your grace to the rule of our Saviour Christ, as in Matthew chapter vii.: "By their fruits ye shall know them." As touching the words that our Saviour Christ spake to his disciples when he sent them to preach his gospel, they are read in Matthew, chapter x., where he shows, "that here they shall be hated and despised of all worldly men, and brought before kings and rulers, and that all evil should be said of them, for their preaching's sake," but he exhorts them to take patiently such persecution by his own example, saying, "It becometh not the servant to be above the master. And seeing they called me Beelzebub, what marvel is it, if they call you devilish persons and heretics?" Read the fourteenth chapter of St. Matthew's

gospel, and there your grace shall see that he promised to the true preachers no worldly promotions or dignity, but persecution and all kinds of punishment, and that they should be betrayed even by their own brethren and children. In John also he saith, "In the world ye shall have oppression, and the world shall hate you; but in me you shall have peace." And in the tenth chapter of St. Matthew's gospel, saith our Saviour Christ also, "Lo, I send you forth as sheep among wolves." So that the true preachers go like harmless sheep, and are persecuted, and yet they revenge not their wrong, but remit all to God: so far are they from persecuting any other but with the word of God only, which is their weapon. And so this is the most evident token that our Saviour Jesus Christ would that his gospel and the preachers of it should be known by, that it should be despised among those worldly wise men, and that they should repute it but foolishness and deceivable doctrine, and the true preachers should be persecuted and hated, and driven from town to town, yea, and at the last lose both goods and life.

And yet they that did this persecution, think that they do well, and a great pleasure to God. And the apostles remembering this lesson of our Saviour Christ, were content to suffer such persecutions, as you may read in the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles. But we never read that they ever persecuted any man. The holy apostle St. Paul saith, "That every man that will live godly in Christ Jesus, shall suffer persecution." And also, he saith further in the epistle written to the Philippians in the first chapter: "That it is not only given to you to believe in the Lord, but also to suffer persecution for his sake."

Wherefore take this for a sure conclusion, that where the word of God is truly preached, there is persecution, as well of the hearers as of the teachers: and where is quietness and rest in worldly pleasure, there is not the truth. For the world loveth all that are of the world, and hateth all things that are contrary to it. And to be short, St. Paul calleth the gospel the word of the cross, the word of punishment. And the Holy Scripture promises nothing to the favourers and followers of it in this world, but trouble, vexation, and persecution, which these worldly men cannot suffer or endure.

Therefore may it please your good grace, to return to the golden rule of our master and Saviour Jesus Christ,

which is this: "By their fruits ye shall know them." For where you see persecution, there is the gospel and there is the truth: and they that persecute are void and wholly without truth; not caring for the clear light, which (as our Saviour Jesus Christ saith in the third chapter of St. John's Gospel) "is come into the world, and which shall utter and show forth every man's works." And they whose works are naught, dare not come to this light, but go about to stop it and hinder it, hindering as much as they may, the Holy Scripture from being read in our mother tongue, saying, that it would cause heresy and insurrection, and so they persuade, at the least they would fain persuade, your grace to keep it back. But here mark their shameless boldness, who are not ashamed, contrary to Christ's doctrine, to gather figs of thorns, and grapes of bushes, and to call light darkness, and darkness light, sweet sour, and sour sweet, good evil, and evil good, and to say, that what teaches all obedience, should cause dissension and strife, but such is their belly wisdom.* Therewith they judge and measure every thing, to hold and keep still this wicked mammon, the goods of this world, which is their God, and has so blinded the eyes of their hearts, that they cannot see the clear light of the sacred Scripture, though they babble ever so much of it.

But as concerning this matter, other men have showed your grace their minds, how necessary it is to have the Scripture in English. Which also your grace has promised by your last proclamation: the which promise I pray God that your gracious Highness may shortly perform, even to-day—before to-morrow. Let not the wickedness of these worldly men detain you from your godly purpose and promise. Remember the subtle worldly wise counsellors of Hanun, the son of Nahash king of the Ammonites, who, when David had sent his servants to comfort the young king for the death of his father, by crafty imaginations counselled Hanun, not to receive them gently, but to treat them most shamefully and cruelly, saying:—"That they came not to comfort him, but to espy and search his land, so that afterward they bringing David word how every thing stood, David might come and conquer it." And they caused the young king to shear their heads, and to cut off their coats by the points,† and send

* Carnal wisdom. † The middle.

them away like fools: whom he ought rather to have made much of, and to have treated them gently, and have given them great thanks and rewards. O wretched counsellors! But see what followed of this carnal and worldly wisdom. Truly, nothing but destruction of the whole realm, and also of all who took their parts.

Therefore, good king, seeing that the right David, that is to say, our Saviour Christ has sent his servants, that is to say, his true preachers, and his own word also, to comfort our weak and sick souls, let not these worldly men make your grace believe that they will cause insurrections and heresies, and such mischiefs as they imagine of their own mad brains, lest he be avenged upon you and your realm, as David was upon the Ammonites, and as he has ever been avenged upon those who obstinately withstand and gainsay his word. But peradventure they will lay this against me, and say that experience shows that such men as call themselves followers of the gospel, regard not your grace's commandment, nor respect your proclamation; and that this was well proved by those persons who of late were punished in London for keeping such books as your grace had prohibited by proclamation: and so like as they regarded not this, so they will not regard or esteem your grace's other laws, statutes and ordinances. But this is but a crafty persuasion. For your grace knows that there is no man living, especially one who loves worldly promotion, that is so foolish as to set forth, promote, or enhance his enemy, whereby he should be hindered from his worldly pleasures and fleshly desires: but rather he will seek all the ways possible that he can, utterly to confound, destroy, and put him out of the way. And so as concerning your last proclamation, prohibiting such books, the very true cause of it, and chief counsellors (as men say, and of likelihood it should be) were those whose evil living and cloked hypocrisy these books uttered and disclosed. And howbeit that there were three or four who would have had the Scriptures to go forth in English, yet it happened there, as it is evermore seen, that the most part overcomes the better; and so it might be that these men did not take this proclamation as yours, but as theirs set forth in your name, as they have done many times more, which has put this your realm in great hinderance and trouble, and brought it into great penury, and would have done more if God had not mercifully provided

to bring your grace to the knowledge of the falsehood and privy treason, which their head and captain* was about: and be sure not without adherents, if the matter be duly searched. For what marvel is it, that they being so nigh your counsel, and so familiar with your lords, should provoke both your grace and them to prohibit these books, which before by their own authority have forbidden the New Testament under pain of everlasting damnation: for such is their manner, to send a thousand men to hell, ere they send one to God, and yet the New Testament (and so I think by the others) was meekly offered to every man that would and could, to amend it, if there were any fault.

Moreover, I will ask them the causes of all insurrections which have been in this realm heretofore. And whence is it that there are so many extortioners, bribers, murderers, and thieves, who daily do not only break your grace's laws, ordinances, and statutes, but also the laws and commandments of Almighty God? I think they will not say these books, but rather their pardons cause many a man to sin by trusting them. For as for those malefactors whom I just mentioned, you shall not find one among a hundred, but that he will cry out both against these books, and also those that have them, yea, and will be glad to spend the goods which he has wrongfully gotten, upon fagots to burn both the books and those that have them.

And as touching the men who were lately punished for these books, there is no man, I hear say, that can lay any word or deed against them that should sound to the breaking of any of your grace's laws, this only excepted, if it be yours, and not rather theirs. And be it so that there are some who have these books, that are evil, unruly, and self-willed persons, not regarding God's laws nor man's, yet these books are not the cause thereof, no more than the bodily presence of Christ and his words were the cause that Judas fell, but their own froward mind and carnal wisdom, which should be amended by the virtuous example of living of their curates, and by the true exposition of the Scripture. If the lay people had curates that would thus do their office, these books or the devil himself could not hurt them, or make them to go out of frame; so that the lack of good curates is the cause of destruction and all

* He meaneth the pope, who went about to drive king Henry out of his kingdom, and that not without some adherents near about the king.—*Fox.*

mischief. Neither do I write these things because I will either excuse these men who were lately punished, or affirm all to be true that is written in these books, which I have not all read; but to show that such inconvenience cannot follow from them, and especially from the Scripture as they would make men believe should follow.

And though your grace may by other books, and namely by the Scripture itself, know and perceive the hypocritical wolves clad in sheep's clothing, yet I think myself bound in conscience to utter unto your grace such things as God hath put in my mind to write. And this I do (God so judge me) not for hate of any person or persons living, nor that I think the word of God would go forth without persecution, even if your grace had commanded that every man within your realm should have it in his mother tongue. For the gospel must needs have persecution until the time that it is preached throughout all the world, which is the last sign that Christ showed to his disciples should come before the day of judgment: so that if your grace had once commanded that the Scripture should be put forth, the devil would set forth some wile or other to persecute the truth. But my purpose is, for the love that I have to God principally, and the glory of his name, which is only known by his word, and for the true allegiance that I owe unto your grace, and not to hide in the ground of my heart the talent given me by God, but to chaffer* it forth to others, that it may increase to the pleasure of God—to exhort your grace to avoid and beware of these mischievous flatterers and their abominable ways and counsels.

And take heed whose counsels your grace doth take in this matter: for there are some who, for fear of losing their worldly worship and honour, will not leave their opinion, which rashly, and to please men by whom they had great promotion, they took upon them to defend by writing, so that now they think that all their felicity which they put in this life should be marred, and their wisdom not so greatly regarded, if that which they have so slanderously oppressed should now be put forth and allowed. But alas! let these men remember St. Paul, how fervent he was against the truth (out of great zeal) before he was called: he thought it no shame to suffer punishment and great persecutions for that which he before despised and called

* Utter.

heresy. And I am sure that their living is not more perfect than St. Paul's was, concerning the outward works of the law before he was converted.

Also the king and prophet David was not ashamed to forsake his good intent in building of the temple, after the prophet Nathan had showed him that it was not the pleasure of God that he should build any house for him: and notwithstanding Nathan had before allowed and praised the purpose of David, yet he was not ashamed to revoke his words again when he knew that they were not according to God's will and pleasure.

Wherefore they are sore drowned in worldly wisdom who think it against their worship* to acknowledge their ignorance. I pray to God that your grace may espy and take heed of their worldly wisdom, which is foolishness before God; that you may do that which God commands, and not that which seems good in your own sight without the word of God; that your grace may be found acceptable in his sight, and one of the members of his church: and according to the office that he hath called your grace unto, you may be found a faithful minister of his gifts, and not a defender of his faith;† for he will not have it defended by man or man's power, but by his word only, by which he hath evermore defended it, and that by a way far above man's power or reason, as all the stories of the Bible make mention.

Wherefore, gracious king, remember yourself, have pity upon your soul, and think that the day is even at hand when you shall give account of your office and of the blood that hath been shed with your sword. In which day that your grace may stand steadfastly and be not ashamed, but be clear and ready in your reckoning, and have (as they say) your quietus est,‡ sealed with the blood of our Saviour Christ, which only serveth at that day, is my daily prayer to Him that suffered death for our sins, who also prayeth to his Father for grace for us continually. To whom be all honour and praise for ever, Amen. The Spirit of God preserve your grace. Anno Domini 1530, 1 die Decembris.§

* Honour.

† The pope's title given to king Henry a short time before.—*Fox.*

‡ Acquittal.

§ In this letter of Master Latimer to the king we have many things to consider: First, his good conscience to God, his good will to the king, the duty of a right pastor unto truth, his tender care to

II.

Extracts from a Letter of M. Latimer to M. Morice, concerning the Articles written, which were falsely and untruly laid against him.

Right worshipful, and mine own good Master Morice, I salute you in Christ Jesus. And I thank you for all your hearty kindness, not only heretofore showed unto me, but also that now of late you vouchsafed to write unto me, to my great comfort among all these my troubles. I trust and doubt not but God will reward you for me, and supply abundantly mine inability.

Master Morice, you would wonder to know how I have been treated at Bristol, I mean by some of the priests, who at first desired me, welcomed me, made me cheer, heard what I said, and allowed my saying in all things whilst I was with them. But when I was gone home to my benefice, perceiving that the people favoured me so greatly, and that the Mayor had appointed me to preach at Easter, they privily procured an inhibition for all who had not the Bishop's license, which they knew well enough I had not, and so craftily defeating Master Mayor's appointment, pretend-

the commonwealth, and specially to the church of Christ. Further, we have to consider the abuse of princes' courts, how kings many times are abused by flatterers and wicked counsellors about them; and specially we may note the subtle practices of prelates, in abusing the name and authority of kings to set forth their own malignant proceedings. We may see, moreover, in the said letter, and rather marvel at the great boldness and divine stoutness in this man, who, as yet being no bishop, so freely and plainly without any fear of death adventured his own life to discharge his conscience, and durst so boldly, to so mighty a prince, in such a dangerous case, against the king's law and proclamation set out in such a terrible time, take upon him to write, and to admonish that, which no counsellor durst once speak unto him, in defence of Christ's gospel. Whose example if the bishops and prelates of this realm, for their parts likewise in like cases of necessity would follow (as indeed they should) so many things peradventure would not be so out of frame as they are, and all for lack that the officers of God's word do not their duty.

Finally, moreover, in the said letter is to be noted, how blessedly Almighty God wrought with his faithful servant, whose bold adventure, and wholesome counsel, though it did not prevail through the iniquity of the time; yet notwithstanding God so wrought with his servant in doing his duty, that no danger, nor yet displeasure rose to him thereby, but rather thanks and good will of the prince; for not long after the same he was advanced by the king to the bishopric of Worcester.—*Fox.*

ing that they were sorry for it. They procured also certain preachers to blatter* against me, as Hubberdin and Powel, with others, whom when I had brought before the Mayor and the wise council of the town, to know what they could lay to my charge, and wherefore they so declaimed against me, they said they spake by information: howbeit no man could be brought forth that would abide by any thing. So that they had place and time to belie me shamefully, but they had no place nor time to lay to my charge when I was present and ready to make them answer. God amend them, and assuage the malice that they have against the truth and me, &c.

Our Lady was a sinner.

So they did belie me to have said, when I had said nothing so. But to reprove certain both priests and beneficed men, who give so much to our lady as though she had not been saved by Christ, who is a whole Saviour both of her, and of all that are and shall be saved, I reasoned after this manner—that either she was a sinner, or no sinner: if a sinner, then she was delivered from sin by Christ: so that he saved her, either by delivering or preserving her from sin, so that without him neither she, nor any other, either are or could be saved. And to avoid all offence I showed how it might be answered, both by certain Scriptures which make all generally to be sinners, and how it might be answered unto Chrysostom and Theophylact, who make her namely and specially a sinner. But all would not serve, their malice was so great: notwithstanding five hundred honest men can and will bear record. When they cannot reprove what I do say, then they will belie me, as if I said that they can reprove, for they will needs appear to be against me.†

Ave Maria.

As for the Ave Maria, who can think that I would deny it? I said it was a heavenly greeting, or saluting of our blessed lady, wherein the angel Gabriel, sent from the

* Rail.

† Latimer then proceeds to show that his words had been in like manner misrepresented as to the worship of saints and pilgrimages. It appears that he had already been enabled to perceive and to reject the absurdity and unscriptural nature of the Romish doctrines on these subjects, but had not yet clearly discerned the full scriptural truth upon these points.

Father of heaven, did annunciate* and show unto her the good will of God towards her—what he would, and to what he had chosen her. But I said it was not properly a prayer, as the Pater noster, which our Saviour Christ himself made for a proper prayer, and bade us say it for a prayer, not adding that we should say ten or twenty Ave Marias withal. And I denied not but that we may well say Ave Maria also, but not so that we should think that the Pater noster is not good, a whole and perfect prayer, nor cannot be well said without Ave Maria: so that I did not speak against well saying of it, but against superstitious saying of it, and of the Pater noster too, and yet I put a difference betwixt it, and that which Christ made to be said for prayer.

No fire in hell.

Who ever could say or think so? howbeit good authors put a difference betwixt suffering in the fire with bodies and without bodies. The soul without the body is a spiritual substance, which they say cannot receive a corporeal quality, and some make it a spiritual fire; and some a corporeal fire. And as it is called a fire, so is it called a worm, and it is thought of some not to be a material worm, (that is, a living animal,) but it is a metaphor. For a fire it is, a worm it is, pain it is, a torment it is, an anguish it is, a grief, a misery, a sorrow, a heaviness inexplicable, intolerable, whose nature and condition in every point who can tell, but he that is of God's privy council, saith St. Augustine. May God give us grace rather to be diligent to keep out of it, than to be curious to discuss the property of it: for certain we are, that there is little ease in it, yea none at all, but weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth, which are two effects of extreme pain, or rather certain tokens what pain there is, than what manner of pain there is.

No purgatory.

He that shows the state and condition of it, does not deny it. But I had rather be in it, than in Lollards' Tower, the bishop's prison, for divers causes.†

* Announce. Ave Maria is the salutation of the angel to the virgin Mary. (Luke i. 28.) It is often repeated by ignorant Romanists in Latin, as a prayer, with the Lord's prayer.

† Latimer here reproves the cruel proceedings of the Romish prelates, by an ironical comparison between the sufferings of the Protestants in Lollards' Tower, and the state of souls in the Romish purgatory.

This passage is so characteristic of Latimer, and so fully exposes

First, in this* I might die bodily for lack of meat and drink: in that† I could not.

Item, in this I might die spiritually‡ for fear of pain, or lack of good counsel: there I could not.

Item, in this I might be in extreme necessity: in that I could not.

Item, in this I might need charity: there I could not.

Item, in this I might lose my patience: in that I could not.

Item, in this I might be in peril and danger of death: in that I could not.

Item, in this I might be without surety of salvation: in that I could not.

Item, in this I might dishonour God: in that I could not.

Item, in this I might murmur and grudge against God: in that I could not.

Item, in this I might displease God: in that I could not.

Item, in this I might be displeased with God: in that I could not.

Item, in this I might be judged to perpetual prison as they call it: in that I could not.

Item, in this I might be craftily handled: in that I could not.

Item, in this I might be brought to bear a fagot:§ in that I could not.

Item, in this I might be discontented with God: in that I could not.

Item, in this I might be separated and dissevered from Christ: in that I could not.

the absurdity of purgatory, that it has been retained, although a brief explanation may be desirable. The reader will bear in mind, that the Church of Rome defines purgatory to be "A middle state of souls which depart this life *in God's grace*, yet not without some lesser stains or guilt, which retard them from entering heaven;" and that "the souls detained therein are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, that is, by the prayers and alms offered for them, and principally by the holy sacrifice of the mass." See "*The Profession of Faith*" published by Pope Pius IV.

For these prayers and masses the priests required payment, so that it was a source of enormous gain to the church of Rome, and was called by Latimer and other reformers "Purgatory pick-purse." He here shows that according to their own doctrine, notwithstanding the dreadful representations they made of purgatory, it was not so bad as one of their bishops' prisons! It is unnecessary to observe how much more impression this mode of argument would make upon the people than a more scholastic refutation of the doctrine.

* Lollards' Tower.
† Purgatory.
‡ Destroy my soul.
§ Recant.

Item, in this I might be a member of the devil: in that I could not.

Item, in this I might be an inheritor of hell: in that I could not.

Item, in this I might pray for charity, and in vain: in that I could not.

Item, in this my lord and his chaplains might manacle* me by night: in that they could not.

Item, in this they might strangle me, and say that I had hanged myself:† in that they could not.

Item, from this they might have me to the consistory,‡ and judge me after their fashion: from thence they could not.

Therefore I had rather be there than here. For though the fire is said to be ever so hot, yet if the bishop's two fingers can shake away a piece,§ a friar's cowl,‖ another part, and scala cœli,¶ altogether, I will never found an abbey, college, nor chantry, for that purpose.

For seeing there is no pain which can break my charity, break my patience, cause me to dishonour God, to displease God, to be displeased with God, cause me not to joy in God, or that can bring me to danger of death, or to danger of desperation, or from surety of salvation, that can separate me from Christ, or Christ from me, I care the less for it. John Chrysostom saith, that the greatest pain that damned souls have, is to be separate and cut off from Christ for ever: which pain he saith is greater than many hells: which pains the souls in purgatory neither have nor can have.

Consider, M. Morice, whether provision for purgatory hath not brought thousands to hell.** Debts have not been paid; restitution of evil-gotten lands and goods has not been made; Christian people (whose necessities we see,

* Fetter. † As they did with Hunne.—*Fox.*

‡ The bishop's court.

§ The Romish priests stretched out two fingers when they gave a benediction or absolution to the people.

‖ If a person was buried in a friar's cowl, it was supposed that his soul would be saved.

¶ Scala cœli was among "the superstitious observances and idolatrous rites" abolished in the reign of king Henry VIII., by which the doctrine of purgatory had been supported. See *Strype's Annals*, vol. i. App. p. 50.

** Latimer here refers to the vast sums which men have given, that themselves and others might be freed from purgatory.

to whom whatsoever we do, Christ reputeth as done to himself, to whom we are bound under pain of damnation to do for, as we would have done for ourselves) are neglected and suffered to perish; last wills are unfulfilled and broken; God's ordinances are set aside; and also foundations have been taken as sufficient satisfaction for purgatory; so we have trifled away the ordinances of God and restitutions. Thus we have gone to hell, with masses, diriges, and ringing of many a bell. And who can separate pilgrimages from idolatry, and purge purgatory from robbery, but he shall be in danger of being suspected of heresy by them. So that they pil* with pilgrimage, and spoil with purgatory. And verily the abuse of them cannot be taken away, but great lucre and advantage shall fall away from them, who had rather have profit with abuse, than lack the same with use: and that is the wasp that stings them, and maketh them to swell. And if purgatory were purged of all that it hath gotten by setting aside restitution, and robbing of Christ, it would be but a poor purgatory. So poor that it would not be able to feed so fat, and trick up so many idle and slothful lubbers.

I take God to witness I would hurt no man, but it grieves me to see such abuse continue without remedy. I cannot understand what they mean by the pope's pardoning of purgatory, but by way of suffrage;† and as for suffrage, unless he does his duty, and seeks not his own but Christ's glory, I had rather have the suffrage of Jack of the scullery, who in his calling exercises both faith and charity. But for the pope's mass—that is as good of another simple priest as from him. For as to the authority of keys it is to loose from guiltiness of sin, and eternal pain due to the same, according to Christ's word, and not to his own private will. And as for pilgrimage, you would wonder what juggling there is to get money withal. I dwell within a half mile of the Fossway,‡ and you would wonder to see how they come by flocks out of the west country to many images, but chiefly to the blood of Hailes.§ And they believe verily that it is the very blood that was in Christ's body, shed upon the mount of Calvary for our

* Pillage. † Except assistance by prayer—intercession.

‡ A high-road which traversed great part of England, from Seaton in Devonshire to Lincolnshire.

§ This blood of Hailes was proved before the king, and openly showed at Paul's cross by the bishop of Rochester that then was, to be but the blood of a duck.—*Fox.*

salvation, and that the sight of it with their bodily eye certifies them and puts them out of doubt, that they are in clean life, and in a state of salvation without spot of sin, which emboldens them to many things.* For you would wonder if you should commune with them, both coming and going, what faiths they have! For as for forgiving their enemies, and reconciling their Christian brethren, they cannot attend to them, for the sight of that blood quits them for the time!

I read in Scripture of two certifications, (of the remission of sins,) one to the Romans, "We being justified by faith have peace with God." If I see the blood of Christ with the eyes of my soul, that is, true faith, that his blood was shed for me. Another in the epistle of John: "We know that we are translated from death to life, because we love the brethren."

But I read not that I have peace with God, or that I am translated from death to life, because I see with my bodily eyes the blood of Hailes. It is very probable that all the blood that was in the body of Christ was united and knit to his divinity, and then no part thereof shall return to his corruption. And I marvel that Christ shall have two resurrections. And if it were that they who violently and injuriously plucked it out of his body when they scourged him and nailed him to the cross, did see it with their bodily eyes, yet they were not in clean life. And we see the selfsame blood in form of wine, when we have consecrated, and may both see it, feel it, and receive it to our condemnation as touching bodily receiving. And many see it at Hailes without confession, as they say. God knoweth all, and the devil in our time is not dead.

Christ has left a doctrine behind him, wherein we are taught how to believe, and what to believe. He suffers the devil to use his crafty fashion for our trial and probation. It were little thankworthy to believe well and rightly, if nothing moved us to false faith and to believe superstitiously. It was not in vain that Christ when he had taught truly, said, "Beware of false prophets, which would bring in error slily." But we are secure and careless, as though false prophets could not meddle with us, and as though the warning of Christ were no more earnest and effectual than the warning of mothers when they trifle with their children to frighten them.

* Makes them careless as to sinning.

Lo, sir, how I run riot beyond measure. When I began, I was minded to have written but half a dozen lines; but thus I ever forget myself when I write to a trusty friend, who will take in my folly, and keep it from mine enemy.

As for Doctor Wilson, I know not what I should say: but I pray God endue him with charity. Neither he, nor any of his countrymen, ever loved me since I inveighed against their factions and partiality in Cambridge. Before that, who was more favoured of him than I? That is the bile* that may not be touched.

As for Hubberdin, (no doubt,) he is a man of no great learning, nor yet of stable wit.† He is here as a servant of men: for he will preach whatsoever the bishops bid him preach. Verily in my mind they are more to be blamed than he. He magnifies the pope more than enough. As for our Saviour Christ and Christian kings they are little beholden to him. Howbeit, they that sent him, men think, will defend him: I pray God to amend him, and them both. They would fain make matter against me, intending either to deliver him by me, or else to get rid of us both together, and so they would think him well bestowed.

As touching Dr. Powel, how highly he took upon him in Bristol, and how little he regarded the sword‡ which represents the king's person, many can tell you. I think there is not an earl in this realm that knows his obedience by Christ's commandment to his prince, and knows what the sword signifies, that would have taken upon him so stoutly. Howbeit, Master Mayor, as he is a profound wise man, did twit him prettily: it were too long to write all. Our pilgrimages are not a little beholden to him. For to occasion the people to them, he alleged this text: "Whosoever leaveth father, house, wife, &c." By which you may perceive his hot zeal and crooked judgment. Because I am so belied, I could wish that it would please the king's grace to command me to preach before his Highness a whole year together every Sunday, that he himself might perceive how they belie me, saying, that I have neither learning, nor utterance worthy thereunto, &c. I pray you pardon me, I cannot make an end.

* Sore place.
† Sound understanding.
‡ The magistracy.

III.

Letter sent by M. Latimer, parson of West-Kington, in the county of Wilts, to Sir Edward Baynton, knight.

RIGHT worshipful sir, I recommend me unto your mastership with hearty thanks for your friendly, charitable, and mindful remembrance of me. Whereas of late I received your letters by Master Bonnam, perceiving therein both who are grieved with me, wherefore, and what it behoves me to do, in case I must needs come up; to recompense your goodness towards me with all other such like; whereas I myself am not able, I shall not cease to pray my Lord God, who both is able and also does indeed reward all those that favour the favourers of his truth for his sake: for the truth is a thing pertaining to every man, for which every man shall answer another day. And I desire favour neither of your mastership, nor of any man else, but in truth, and for the truth, as I take God to witness who knoweth all. In very deed, Master Chancellor showed me that my lord bishop of London had sent letters to him for me; and I made answer, That he was my ordinary, and that both he might and should reform me, as far as I needed reformation, as well and as soon as my lord of London. And I would be very loth, (now this deep winter,) being so weak and so feeble, (not only exercised with my old disease in my head and side, but also with new, both the cholic and the stone,) to take such a journey; and though he might so do, yet he need not, for he was not bound so to do. Notwithstanding, if he, to do my lord of London pleasure to my great displeasure, would needs command me to go, I would obey his commandment; yea, though it should be ever so great a grievance and painful to me.

With this answer he was content, saying he would certify my lord of London thereof, trusting his lordship would be content with the same; but as yet I hear nothing from him. Master Chancellor also said, that my Lord of London makes as though he were greatly displeased with me, for that I did contemn his authority, at my last being in London. Forsooth, I preached in Abchurch, not being certain then (as I remember) whether in his diocese or no, intending nothing less than to contemn his authority; and this I did not of mine own will, or by mine own procuration, but

at the request of honest merchants (as they seemed to me) whose names I do not know, for they were not of my acquaintance before: and I am glad thereof for their sakes, lest if I knew them, I should be compelled to utter them, and so their godly desire to hear godly preaching should turn to their trouble; for they required me very instantly, and to say the truth even importunately. Whether they were of that parish or no, I was not certain; but they showed not only themselves, but also many others, to be very desirous to hear me, alleging great hunger and thirst for the word of God and spiritual doctrine. And upon consideration, to avoid all inconveniences, I put them off, and refused them twice or thrice, till at last they brought me word that the parson and curate were not only content, but also desired me, notwithstanding that they certified him both of my name plainly, and also that I had not the bishop's seal to show, but only a license of the University. The curate received me, welcomed me, and when I should go into the pulpit, he gave me the usual benediction; so that I had not only been uncharitable, but also churlishly uncharitable, if I would have said nay. Now all this supposed to be truth, (as it is,) I marvel greatly how my lord of London can allege any contempt of him in me.

First, he never did inhibit me in my life: and if he did inhibit his curate to receive me, what pertaineth that to me, who neither knew thereof, nor yet made any suit to the curate deceitfully? and it did not appear to me very likely that the curate would have so little regarded my lord's inhibition, which he maintaineth so vigilantly, I not knowing my lord's mind before. Therefore I conjectured with myself, that either the curate was of such acquaintance with my lord, that he might admit whom he would, or else (and rather) that it was a train and a trap laid before me, to the intent that my lord himself, or some other pertaining to him, was appointed to have been there, and to have taken me if they could in my sermon; which conjecture both occasioned me somewhat to suspect those men who desired me, though they spoke so fair and friendly, and also made me more ready to go. For I preach nothing, but if it might be so, I would my lord himself might hear me every sermon I preach. So certain I am that it is the truth that I take in hand to preach. If I had by power of my friends, (the curate gainsaying and withstanding) presumed to have gone

into the pulpit, there had been something wherefore to pretend a contempt. I preached in Kent also, at the instant request of a curate; yet I hear not that his ordinary lays any contempt to my charge, or troubles the curate. I marvel not a little, how my lord bishop of London,* having so broad, wide, and large a diocese committed to his cure, and so peopled as it is, can have leisure, since he has to preach and teach the word of God, in season and out of season, privately and publicly, to his own flock, by exhorting, warning with all gentleness and learning—how he can have leisure (I say) either to trouble me, or to trouble himself about me, so poor a wretch, a stranger to him, and not pertaining to his cure, except as every man pertaineth to every man's cure, so intermixing and intermeddling himself with another man's cure, as though he had nothing to do in his own.

If I would do as some men say my lord does, gather up my toyse,† as we call it, warily and narrowly, and yet neither preach for it in my own cure, nor yet elsewhere, peradventure he would deny me nothing. In very deed, I did admonish judges and ordinaries to use charitable equity in their judgments toward such as are accused, namely by such accusers, which are as likely to hear and bewray,‡ as others are to say amiss; and to take men's words in the meaning thereof, and not to wrest them in another sense than they were spoken in. For all such accusers and witnesses are false before God, as St. Jerome saith upon the twenty-sixth chapter of Matthew. I do not account those judges well advised, who wittingly give sentence after such witnesses, much less those who procure such witnesses against any man. And I think not judges now-a-days so deeply confirmed in grace or so faultless, but that it may behove and become preachers to admonish them to do well, as well as other kinds of men, both great and small. And this I did, occasioned by the epistle which I declared, Romans vi., wherein is this sentence, "Ye Christian men that believe in Christ, are not under the law, but under grace." What a saying is this (quoth I) if it is not rightly understood, that is, as St. Paul did understand it! For the words sound as though he would go about to occasion Christian men to break the law, seeing they are not under the law; and what if the false apostles, adversaries

* Stokesly was then bishop of London.

† Fleece, his income. ‡ Misrepresent.

to St. Paul, would so have taken them, and accused St. Paul of the same to my lord of London. If my said lord should have heard St. Paul declare his own mind, in his own words, then he should have escaped, and the false apostles would have been put to rebuke. But if he should have rigorously followed, as was alleged and set forth, and should have given sentence after relation of the accusers, then good St. Paul must have borne a fagot at Paul's Cross, my lord of London being his judge!* Oh, it had been a goodly sight to have seen St. Paul with a fagot on his back, even at Paul's Cross, my lord of London, bishop of the same, sitting under the cross. Nay, verily, I dare say, my lord would have burned him, for St. Paul did not mean that Christian men might break the law, and do whatsoever they would because they were not under the law: but he meant that Christian men might keep the law and fulfil the law, if they would, because they were not under the law, but under Christ; by whom they were divided from the tyranny of the law, and above the law, that is to say, able to fulfil the law to the pleasure of Him who made the law, which they could never do of their own strength, and without Christ. So that to be under the law, after St. Paul's meaning, is to be weak to satisfy the law; and what could St. Paul do withal, though his adversaries would not so take it? But my lord will say peradventure, that men will not take the preacher's words otherwise than they mean therein! As though St. Paul's words were not otherwise taken than he meant, as appears in the third chapter to the Romans; where he saith, that our unrighteousness commendeth and maketh more excellent the righteousness of God: which soundeth to many as though they should be evil, that good should come of it, and by unrighteousness make the righteousness of God more excellent. So St. Paul was reported to mean; yet he meant not so, but showed the inestimable wisdom of God, which can use our naughtiness to the manifestation of his unspeakable goodness: not that we should do naughtily to that end and purpose.

Now my lord will not think, I dare say, that St. Paul was to blame that he did not speak more circumspectly, more warily, or more plainly, to avoid giving offence to the

* Those who were accused as heretics and recanted the opinions they had held, stood at Paul's Cross, bearing a fagot on their shoulders, during divine service.

people. But rather he will blame the people, that they took no better heed and attendance to Paul's speaking, to understand the same. Yea, he will rather pity the people, which had so long nestled in the doctrine of the Pharisees, and wallowed so long in the darkness of man's traditions, superstitions, and manner of living, that they were unapt to receive the bright lightness of the truth, and wholesome doctrine of God, uttered by St. Paul. I think not that my lord will require more circumspection, or more care to avoid giving offence in me, than was in St. Paul, when he did not escape malevolent corrections, and slanderous reports of them that were of perverse judgments, which reported him to say whatever he appeared to them to say, or whatever seemed to them to follow of his saying. But what followeth? "So they report us to say, (saith St. Paul,) so they speak evil of us: but whose damnation is just," (saith he.) And I think the condemnation of all such that evil report preachers now-a-days, is likewise just. Yea, Christ himself was misreported, and falsely accused, both as touching his words, and also as concerning the meaning of his words. First he said, "Destroy you;" they made it, "I can destroy:" he said, "this temple," they added, "made with hands," to bring it to a contrary sense. So they inverted, and added unto his words, to alter his sentence: for he meant the temple of his body, and they wrested it to Solomon's temple.

Now I ask whether it is a just fame raised up, and dispersed after this manner. Nay, verily, for there are three manner of persons who can make no credible information. First, adversaries, enemies; secondly, ignorant and without judgment; thirdly, whisperers and blowers in men's ears, who will say in secret more than they dare avow openly. The first will not, the second cannot, the third dare not; therefore the relation of such is not credible, and can make no lawful report, nor occasion any indifferent judge to make process against any man. And it makes no little matter what they themselves are that report of any man, whether well or evil; for it is a great commendation to be evil spoken of by them that are naught themselves, and to be commended by the same, many times, is no little reproach. God send us all grace to wish well one to another, and to speak well one of another.

It were more comely for my lord (if it were comely for

me to say so) to be a preacher himself, having so great a cure as he hath, than to be a disquieter and a troubler of preachers, and to preach nothing at all himself. If it would please his lordship to take so great labour and pains at any time, as to come and preach in my little bishopric at West Kington, whether I were present or absent myself, I would thank his lordship heartily, and think myself greatly bound to him, that he of his charitable goodness would go so far to help to discharge me in my cure, nor yet would I dispute, contend, or demand by what authority, or where he had authority so to do, as long as his preaching was fruitful, and to the edification of my parishioners. As for my lord, he may do as it pleases his lordship. I pray God he do always as well as I would wish him ever to do. But I am sure St. Paul, the true minister of God, and faithful dispenser of God's mysteries, and right exemplar of all true bishops, saith in the first chapter to the Philippians, that in his time some preached Christ for envy of him, thinking thereby so to grieve him withal, and as it were to obscure him, and to bring his authority into contempt: some of good-will and love, thinking thereby to comfort him: "Notwithstanding, (saith he,) by all manner of ways, and after all fashions, whether it is of occasion or of truth, (as you would say for truth's sake,) so that Christ be preached and showed, I joy and will joy." So much more he regarded the glory of Christ, and the promotion of Christ's doctrine, to the edification of Christian souls, than the maintenance of his own authority, reputation, and dignity; considering right well, as he said, that what authority he had, it was to edification, and not to destruction.

Now I think it were no reproach to my lord but very commendable, rather to joy with St. Paul, and be glad that Christ is preached in whatever manner, yea though it were for envy, that is to say, in disdain, despite and contempt of his lordship, (which thing no man well advised will enterprise or attempt,) than, when the preaching cannot be reproved justly, to demand of the preacher austerely as the Pharisees did of Christ, "By what authority doest thou this, or who gave thee this authority?" My authority is good enough, and as good as my lord can give me, yet I would be glad to have his also, if it would please his lordship to be so good unto me. For the University of

Cambridge has authority to admit twelve preachers yearly, of whom I am one; and the king's highness, God save his grace, decreed that all admitted by the universities, should preach throughout all his realm as long as they preached well, without distrain* of any man, my lord of Canterbury, my lord of Durham, with such others not a few, standing by, and hearing the decree, nothing gainsaying it, but consenting to the same. Now, as to contemn my lord of London's authority were no little fault in me; so no less fault might appear in my lord of London to contemn the king's authority and decree, yea so godly, so fruitful, so commendable a decree pertaining to edification of Christian souls. To have a book which is not forbidden by the king, is to obey the king; and to inhibit a preacher admitted by the king, is it not to disobey the king? Is it not one king that doth inhibit and admit, and has he not as great authority to admit as to inhibit? He that resists the power, whether admitting or inhibiting, does he not resist the ordinance of God? We low subjects are bound to obey powers and their ordinances; and are not the highest subjects also, who ought to give us example of such obedience? As for my preaching itself, I trust in God my lord of London cannot rightfully nor justly reprove it, if it be considered with the circumstances thereof, and as I spake it, or else it is not my preaching, but his that falsely reporteth it, as the poet Martial said to one who abused his book.

But now I hear say that my lord of London is informed, and upon the said information hath informed the king, that I went about to defend Bilney and his cause, against his ordinaries and judges, which I assure you is not so; for I had nothing to do with Bilney, nor yet with his judges, except his judges did him wrong. For I did nothing but admonish all judges indifferently to do right, and I am not altogether so foolish as to defend the thing which I knew not. It might have become a preacher to say as I said, though Bilney had never been born. I have known Bilney a great while, I think much better than ever my lord of London did, for I have been his ghostly father† many a time. And to tell you the truth, and what I have thought always of him, I have known hitherto few such, so prompt and ready to do every man good after his power, both friends and foes, doing harm designedly to no man,

* Hinderance, restraint. † Confessor.

and towards his enemies so charitable; so seeking to reconcile them, as he did, I have known not many. And to be short, a very simple good soul, nothing fit for this wretched world, whose blind fashion and miserable state (yea far from Christ's doctrine) he could as little bear, and would sorrow, lament and bewail it as much as any man that ever I knew. As for his singular learning, as well in Holy Scripture as in all other good knowledge, I will not speak of it. Notwithstanding if he either now of late, or at any time attempted any thing contrary to the obedience which a Christian man owes either to his prince or to his bishop, I neither do, nor will allow and approve that, neither in him nor yet in any other man. We all are men, and ready to fall; wherefore he that standeth, let him beware he fall not. How he ordered or misordered himself in judgment, I cannot tell, and I will not meddle withal: God knoweth, whose judgments I will not judge. But I cannot but wonder; if a man living so mercifully, so charitably, so patiently, so continently, so studiously, and virtuously, and killing his old Adam, that is to say, mortifying his evil affections, and blind motions of his heart so diligently, should die an evil death, there is no more to be said, but let him that standeth beware that he fall not; for if such as he shall die evil, what shall become of me, such a wretch as I am?

But let this go as little to the purpose, and come to the point we must rest upon. Either my lord of London will judge my outward man only, or else he will be my God, and judge mine inward man. If he will have to do only with mine outward man, and will meddle with mine outward conversation, how I have ordered myself toward my Christian brethren the king's liege people, I trust I shall please and content both my Lord God, and also my lord of London. For I have preached and taught only according to Holy Scripture, holy fathers, and ancient interpreters of the same, with whom I think my lord of London will be pacified; for I have done nothing else in my preaching, but with all diligence moved my auditors to faith and charity, to do their duty and that which is necessary to be done. As for things of private devotion, mean things, and voluntary things, I have reproved the abuse, the superstition of them, without condemnation of the things themselves, as it becomes preachers to do: which if my lord of London should do himself (as I would to God he

would do,) he would be reported, no doubt, to condemn the use of such things, by covetous men who have damage, and find less in their boxes by condemnation of the abuse, which abuse they had rather should continue still, than their profit should not continue, so thorny be their hearts. If my lord will needs coast and invade my inward man, will I nill I, and break violently into my heart, I fear me I shall either displease my lord of London, which I would be very loath to do, or else my Lord God, to which I will be more loath: not for any infidelity, but for ignorance, for I believe as a Christian man ought to believe; but peradventure my lord knows, and will know many things certainly, which perchance I am ignorant in, with which ignorance, though my lord of London may if he will be discontented, yet I trust my Lord God will pardon it as long as I hurt no man withal, and say to him with diligent study and daily prayer, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed;" so studying, preaching, and tarrying the pleasure and leisure of God. And in the mean season, as Apollos did, when he knew nothing of Christ, but the baptism of John, (see Acts, chapter the eighth,) I teach and preach so far, and no further than I know to be true. There are three creeds, one in my mass, another in my matins, the third common to them that neither say mass nor matins, nor yet know what they say when they say the creed:* and I believe all three, with all that God hath left in holy writ, for me and all others, to believe: yet I am ignorant in things which I trust hereafter to know, as I do now know things in which I have been ignorant heretofore; ever learning and ever to be learned, to profit with learning, and not to annoy with ignorance. I have thought in times past, that the Pope was Christ's vicar, lord of all the world as Christ is, so that if he should have deprived the king of his crown, or you of the lordship of Bromeham, it had been enough: for he could do no wrong. Now I might be brought to think otherwise; notwithstanding I have both seen and heard Scripture drawn to that purpose. I have thought in times past, that the pope's dispensations of pluralities of benefices, and absence from the same, had discharged consciences before God; forasmuch as I had heard texts bended to corroborate the same. Now I might be easily entreated to think otherwise.

* Because it was in Latin.

I have thought in times past, that the Pope could have delivered from purgatory at his pleasure with a word of his mouth; now learning might persuade me otherwise, or else I should marvel why he suffers so much money to be bestowed that way, which is so needful to be bestowed otherwise, and so deprives us of as many patrons in heaven as he might deliver out of purgatory. I have thought in times past, that if I had been a friar and in a cowl, I could not have been damned, nor afraid of death; and by occasion of the same, I have been minded many times to have been a friar, namely, when I was sore sick and diseased. Now I abhor my superstitious foolishness. I have thought in times past, that divers images of saints could have holpen me, and done me much good, and delivered me from my diseases; now I know that one can help as much as another. And if grieveth mine heart that my lord and such as my lord is, can suffer the people to be so craftily deceived. It were too long to tell you what blindness I have been in, and how long it were ere I could forsake such folly, it was so incorporated in me: but by continual prayer, continual study of Scripture, and oft communing with men of more right judgment, God hath delivered me. Yea, men think that my lord himself hath thought in times past that by God's law a man might marry his brother's wife, but he now both dares think and say contrary; and yet this his boldness might have chanced in Pope Julius' days, to stand him either in a fire, or else in a fagot.* Which thing deeply considered, and pondered by my lord, might something stir him to charitable equity, and to be something remissible toward men, who labour to do good as their power serveth, with knowledge, and hurt no man with their ignorance. For there is no greater distance than between God's law and not God's law: or that it is so, or not so because any man thinketh it: for if it be indeed either so or not, it is so, though all the world had thought otherwise these thousand years.

And finally, as you say, the matter is weighty and ought substantially to be looked upon, even as weighty as my life is worth; but how to look substantially upon it, otherwise I know not, than to pray my Lord God day and night, that as he hath emboldened me to preach his truth, so he will strengthen me to suffer for it, to the edification

* Latimer alludes to the bishop's sanctioning the king's divorce.

of them which have taken, by his working, fruit thereby; and even so I desire you and all others that favour me for his sake, likewise to pray. For it is not I (without his mighty helping hand) that can abide that brunt: but I have trust that God will help me in time of need, which if I had not, the ocean sea, I think, should have divided my lord of London and me before this day. For it is a rare thing for a preacher to have favour at his hand who is no preacher himself, and yet ought to be. I pray God that both he and I may both discharge ourselves, he in his great cure, and I in my little, to God's pleasure, and the safety of our souls. Amen. I pray you pardon me that I write not more distinctly, nor more truly: for my head is so out of frame, that it would be too painful for me to write it again; and if I am not prevented, shortly I intend to rejoice with my parishioners this Christmas, for all this sorrow, lest perchance I never return to them again.*

IV.

The second Letter of M. Latimer to Sir Edward Baynton.

Right worshipful sir, and my singular good master, I salute you in Christ Jesus with due commendation, and also thanks for your great goodness towards me. And whereas you have communicated my last letters to certain of your friends, who rather desire this or that in me, what I think therein I will not now say, not that there could be any peril or danger in the said letters (if well taken) as far as I can judge; but because they were rashly and unadvisedly scribbled, as you might well know, both by my excuse, and by the letters also, though no excuse had been made. And besides that, you know right well, that where the bee gathers honey, even there the spider gathers venom, not for any diversity of the flower, but for divers natures in them that suck the flower. As in times past, and in the beginning, the very truth in itself was to some offence, to some foolishness, to others who were otherwise disposed, the wisdom of God. Such diversity was in the hearers thereof.

* Sir E. Baynton wrote in reply recommending Latimer to conform his opinions to those generally adopted. See *Fox.* The substance of his letter may be gathered from Latimer's answer which follows.

But notwithstanding this, either my writing is good or bad—if it be good, the communicating of it to your friends cannot be hurtful to me: if it be otherwise, why should you not communicate it to them, who both could and would instruct you in the truth, and reform my error? Let this pass, I will not contend: 'had I wist'* cometh ever out of season. Truly I were not well advised if I would not either be glad of your instruction, or should refuse mine own reformation, but yet it is good for a man to look before he leap, and God forbid that you should be addicted and sworn to me, that you should not rather follow the doctrine of your friends *in truth*, so great learned men as they appear to be, than my opinions.

Wherefore do as you will: for I would not if I could, so I cannot if I would, be noisome unto you, but yet I say, I would my letters had been unwritten, if for none other cause, at least inasmuch as they cause me more writing, an occupation nothing meet for my bad head. And as touching points which in my letters displease your friends, I have now little leisure to make an answer thereto, for the great business that I have in my little cure. I know not what other men have in their great cures, seeing that I am alone without any priest to serve my cure, without any scholar to read unto me, without any book necessary to be looked upon, without learned men to come and counsel withal. All which things others have abundantly at hand, but something must be done howsoever it be. I pray you take it in good worth, as long as I temper my own judgment, affirming nothing to the prejudice of better. First, you mislike that I say I am sure that I preach the truth, saying in reproof of the same that God knoweth certain truth. Indeed, only God knoweth all certain truth, and only God knoweth it as of himself, and none knoweth certain truth but God, and those who are taught of God, as saith St. Paul, "God hath revealed it unto them." And your friends deny not but that certain truth is communicated to us, as our capacity may comprehend it, by faith, which if it be truth, as it is, then no more ought to be required of any man, than according to his capacity: now certain it is that every man hath not the same capacity.

But as to my presumption and arrogancy: either I am certain or uncertain that it is truth which I preach. If it be truth, why may not I say so, to encourage my hearers

* Had I thought you would have done so.

to receive the same more ardently, and ensue it more studiously? If I am uncertain, why dare I be so bold to preach it? And if your friends in whom you trust so greatly, are preachers themselves, after their sermon I pray you ask them whether they are certain and sure that they taught you the truth or no, and send me word what they say, that I may learn to speak after them. If they say they are sure, you know what follows: if they say they are not sure, when shall you be sure, having such doubtful teachers? And you yourself, are you certain or uncertain that Christ is your Saviour, and so forth of other articles that you are bound to believe? Or are you sure or unsure that civil ordinances are the good works of God, and that you do God service in doing of them, if you do them for a good intent? If you are uncertain, take heed he is your sure friend that heareth you say so, and then with what conscience do you doubt? "Whatever is not of faith, is of sin." But you say, God only knows the certain truth, and you have it but "as in a glass darkly;" and there have been "those who have a zeal towards God, but not according to knowledge." And to call this or that truth requires a deep knowledge, considering that to you unlearned, what you take for truth may be otherwise, not having, as St. Paul saith, "senses exercised to good and evil," as you reason against me; and so you do best to know nothing surely for truth at all, but to wander meekly hither and thither, "carried about with every wind of doctrine!" Our knowledge here, you say, is but "as in a glass darkly." What then? therefore it is not certain and sure!

I deny your argument, by your leave. Yea, if it be by faith, as you say, it is most sure; because the certainty of faith is the greatest certainty, as Duns and other school doctors say. And there is a great discrepancy between *certain* knowledge and *clear* knowledge; for the former may be of things absent which appear not, the latter requires the presence of the object, I mean of the thing known, so that I *certainly* and surely know the thing which I perfectly believe, though I do not *clearly* and evidently know it. I know your school subtleties as well as you, who dispute as though enigmatical knowledge, that is to say, dark and obscure knowledge, might not be certain and sure knowledge, because it is not clear, manifest and evident knowledge; and yet there have been, they say, "those who have had a zeal, but not after knowledge." Truth it is, there

have been such, and yet are too many, to the great hinderance of Christ's glory, which nothing more obscures than a hot zeal accompanied with great authority, without right judgment. There have been also, "Those who have had knowledge without zeal to God, who holding the truth of God in unrighteousness, shall be beaten with many stripes, since while they knew the will of God they did it not." I mean not among Turks and Saracens that are unchristened, but them that are christened. And there have been also those that have lost the spiritual knowledge of God's word which they had before, because they have not ensued* after it, nor promoted the same, but rather, with their natural understanding, have impugned the wisdom of the Father, and hindered the knowledge thereof, which therefore has been taken away from them; "that Christ should be justified in his words," threatening, Matt. xiii., to him who hath not, that also which he hath, that is, which he seems to have, shall be taken from him. For to abuse that which a man hath, or not to use it well, is as not to have it. And it is also true that wisdom will not dwell in a body subject to sin, and this is true, even though he abound in carnal wisdom; for carnal and philosophical knowledge of the Scriptures is not the wisdom of God, which is unrevealed from the wise and is revealed to little ones. And if to call this or that truth, requires a deep and profound knowledge—then, either every man has a deep and profound knowledge, or else no man can call this or that the truth; and it behoves every preacher to have so deep and profound a knowledge, that he may call this or that the truth, which this or that he preaches for the truth, and yet he may be ignorant and uncertain in many things, both in this and that, as Apollos was: but which things, whether this or that, he will not attempt to preach for the truth. And as for myself, I trust in God that I may have "senses exercised to discern good and evil" in those things which being without deep and profound knowledge in many things I preach not. Yea, there are many things in Scripture in which I cannot certainly discern good and evil, I mean truth and falsehood; not with all the exercise that I have in Scripture, nor yet with the help of all interpreters that I have, so as to content myself and others in all scrupulosities that may arise. But in such cases I am wont to wade no further into the stream, than that I may either go over

* Sought.

or else return back again; having ever respect, not to the ostentation of my little wit, but to the edification of them that hear me, as far as I can, neither passing my own nor yet their capacity.

And such manner of arguments might well serve the devil against the weak and fearful, to occasion them to wander and waver in the faith, and to be uncertain in things in which they ought to be certain. Or else it may appear to make and serve against such preachers which define great subtleties and high matters in the pulpit, which no man can be certain and sure of by God's word to be truth, not even though our senses are most fully excercised to discern good and evil.*

Such argumentation, I say, might appear to make against such preachers, not against me, who simply and plainly utter true faith and the fruits of the same, which are the good works of God which he has prepared for us to walk in, every man to do the thing that pertains to his office and duty in his degree and calling, as the word of God appointeth, which a man may do with soberness, even though he has his senses but indifferently exercised towards discerning good and evil. For it is but foolish humility, willingly to continue always an infant in Christ, and in infirmity: in reproof of which it was said, "Ye have need of milk, not of strong meat." For St. Paul saith not, "Be humble, that ye understand not." For though he would not that we should think arrogantly of ourselves, and above that which it becomes us to think of ourselves, but so to think of ourselves, that we be sober-minded, yet he bids us so to think of ourselves as God hath distributed to every one the measure of faith. For he that may not with meekness think in himself what God hath done for him, and of himself as God hath done for him, how or when shall he give due thanks to God for his gifts? And if your friends will not allow the same, I pray you inquire of them whether they may with sober-mindedness be sure that they preach to you the truth, and whether we may with sobriety and meekness follow St. Paul's bidding, where he saith unto us all:—"Be not children in understanding, but in malice be infants." God give us all grace to keep the mean, and to think of ourselves neither too high nor too low, but that we may restore unto him his gifts again, with

* Latimer then puts some questions to point out the folly of scholastic disputations, which were for the most part absurd and trifling.

good use of the same, that we may build up each other with the same, to the glory of God. Amen.

For my life, I trust in God that I have not, nor by God's grace shall I, either in soberness or in drunkenness, affirm any truth of myself, therewith intending to divide that unity of the congregation of Christ, and the received truth agreed upon by the holy fathers of the church consonant to the Scripture of God, though it be showed you ever so often, that an opinion or manner of teaching which causes dissension in a Christian congregation, is not of God, by the doctrine of St. John in his epistle, where he saith, "Every one that confesseth Christ in the flesh, is of God." But not every thing whereupon *follows* dissension, *causes* dissension, as I would they that showed you that, would also show you whether this opinion, that a man may not marry his brother's wife,* be of God or of men: if it be of men, then, as Gamaliel said, let it come to nought; if it be of God, as I think it is, and perchance your friends also, who can dissolve it but shall seem to strive against God? And yet there are many, not heathens but in Christendom, that differ from the same, who could not bear to hear said unto them, "Ye are of your father the devil." So that such an opinion might seem to some to make a dissension in a Christian congregation, except that perchance with more liberty than others, they may say that an occasion is sometimes taken and not given—which with their favour I might abuse for my defence, but that all things are not lawful in this time of iniquity!

The Galatians having for preachers and teachers the false apostles, by whose teaching they were degenerated from the sweet liberty of the gospel into the sour bond of ceremonies, thought themselves peradventure a Christian congregation when St. Paul wrote his epistle unto them, and were in a quiet trade† under the dominion of masterly curates. So that the false apostles might have objected to St. Paul that his apostleship was not of God, forasmuch as there was dissension in a Christian congregation by occasion thereof. While some would renew their opinions by occasion of the epistle, some would think as they were wont to do, and follow their great lords and masters, the false apostles, who were not heathen and unchristened, but christened, and high prelates of the profes-

* The question respecting king Henry's divorce.
† State of quietness.

sors of Christ. As to your friends, I know right well what Erasmus has said in an epistle set before the paraphrases of the first epistle to the Corinthians. Which Erasmus has caused no small dissension with his pen in a Christian congregation, inasmuch as many have dissented from him, not only in cloisters but more than merely christened men, men of high perfection, and also at Paul's Cross and St. Mary Spital,* besides many that with no small zeal have written against him, but not without answer.

And I would fain learn of your friends, whether St. Jerome's writing were of God, which caused dissension in a Christian congregation, as it appears by his own words in a prologue before the canonical epistles, which are these:— "And you Eustochium, a virgin follower of Christ, when you seriously inquire of me respecting scriptural truth, expose me in my advanced age to the biting and cavilling of some, who assert that I am a falsifier and corrupter of Scripture; but in such a work I fear not their envy, nor can I withhold the truths of Scripture from earnest inquirers." I pray you, were they who called St. Jerome a falsifier and corrupter of Scripture, and for envy would have bitten him with their teeth, heathens or Christians? What had the heathen to do with Christian doctrine? They were worshipful fathers of a Christian congregation, men of hot stomachs rather than of right judgment, of great authority rather than of good charity: but St. Jerome would not cease to do good for the evil; he speaks of them that were naught, giving an example to us of the same: and if such dissensions were in St. Jerome's time, what may not be in our time, which, truly, are gone from bad to worse?

And I pray you what mean your friends by a Christian congregation? All those, think you, that have been christened? But many of those are in a worse condition, and shall have greater damnation, than many unchristened. For it is not enough for a Christian congregation that is of God, to have been christened; but it is to be considered what we promise when we are christened—to renounce Satan, his works, his pomps. Which if we exert not ourselves to do, let us not boast that we profess Christ's name in a Christian congregation, in one baptism. And where they add "in one Lord," I read in Matt. vii. "Not every one that saith Lord, Lord, &c." And in Luke the Lord

* The most eminent divines were selected to preach at those places.

himself complains and rebukes such professors and confessors, saying to them: "Why call you me Lord, Lord, and do not that I bid you." Even as though it were enough for a Christian man, or for a Christian congregation, to say every day, Lord, our Lord, and to salute Christ with, Lord, Lord. But I wish your friends would take the pains to read Chrysostom on Matthew, chap. xxiv. homily xlix. to learn to know a Christian congregation, if it will please them to learn of him. And where they add, "in one faith," St. James saith boldly, "Show me thy faith by thy works." And St. Jerome, "If we believe, we show the truth in our works." And Scripture saith, "He that believes God, keeps his commandments." And the devils believe to their little comfort. I pray God to save you and your friends from that believing congregation, and from that faithful company!

Therefore all this concerns not them that are unchristened, but them that are christened and answer not unto their Christian profession. For St. Jerome shows how true preachers should conduct themselves, when evil priests and false preachers, and the people that are deceived by them, should be angry with them for preaching the truth, vol. 5. on Jeremiah, chap. 26. exhorting them to suffer death for the fame of the evil priests and false preachers and the people deceived of them; which evil priests and false preachers, with the people deceived, are christened as well as the others. And I fear that St. Jerome might appear to some Christian congregations, as they will be called, to write seditiously, to divide the unity of a great number, confessing Christ "in one baptism, one Lord, one faith," saying, "The people which formerly were lulled to sleep by their masters must go to the mountains, not to those which smoked when they were touched, (see Heb. xii.) but to the mountains of the Old and New Testaments, the prophets, apostles, and evangelists. And when engaged in reading them, if they find not teachers, for the harvest is great and the labourers are few, yet the diligent study of the people shall be approved, and the slothfulness of the teachers shall be reproved." Vol. 6. on Nahum.

I marvel why our Christian congregation* is so greatly grieved that lay people should read Scripture, seeing that St. Jerome allows and approves the same, who in this place compares not the unchristened with the christened, but

* The church of Rome.

the lay people christened to their christened curates, under whom they have been rocked and locked asleep a great while full soundly, though now of late they have been waked but to their trouble, at least to the trouble of them that have wakened them with the word of God. And St. Jerome properly calls them masters and not servants, meaning that servants teach not their own doctrine, but the doctrine of their master Christ, to his glory. Masters teach not Christ's doctrine but their own, to their own glory: which masterly curates cannot be quiet till they have lulled the people asleep again; but Christ, the very true master, saith, "Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation." "My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." And there have been those who have gone about counsels which they could not establish. I pray God give our people grace so to wake, that their study (of the Scriptures) be approved, and our masters so to sleep that their slothfulness be not reproved. For who is so blind that he sees not how far our Christian congregation contradicts St. Jerome, and speaks after another fashion? May God amend what is amiss; for we are somewhat wide, I think.

But your friends have learned of St. John, that "Every one that confesseth Jesus Christ in the flesh is of God." And I have learned of St. Paul, that there have been, not among the heathen, but among the Christians, those who confess Christ with their mouths, and deny him with their acts. So that St. Paul should appear to expound St. John, saving that I will not affirm any thing as of myself, but leave it to your friends to show you whether those who by their deeds and life deny Christ, are of God, only because they confess him with their lips: for your friends know well enough by the same St. John, "He that is of God sinneth not:" and there both have been and are now too many, who by their mouths confess that Christ is come in the flesh, but who will not effectually hear the word of God by consenting to the same, notwithstanding that St. John saith, "he that is of God heareth his words. Ye hear not because ye are not of God:" and many shall hear "I never knew you," who not only have been christened, but also have prophesied, and done puissant things in the name of Christ; and St. Paul said, "there should come ravening wolves which will not spare the flock," meaning it of them that should "confess Christ to have come in the flesh," in their lips, and yet usurp by succession the office, whom

Christ calls false prophets, and bids us beware of them, saying, they shall come in sheep's clothing, and yet they may wear satin, silk, and velvet, they are called afterwards "wicked servants, not feeding but persecuting their fellow servants, eating and drinking with the drunkards, but shall have their portion with hypocrites at the last." They are called servants, I trow, because they confess with the mouth that Christ is come in the flesh; and wicked servants, because in works they deny him, not giving food in due season, and exercising dominion over the flock. And yet your friends reason as though none bark and bite at true preachers, but they that are unchristened, notwithstanding that St. Augustine upon the same epistle of John calls such confessors of Christ, *Antichrist*—a strange name for a Christian congregation. And though St. Augustine could defend his saying, yet his saying might appear not to be of God to some men's judgment, since it breaks the chain of Christ's charity, so as to cause men to hate antichrists, according to the doctrine of St. Paul, "Hate that which is evil:" and so makes division not between christened and unchristened, but between Christians and antichristians, when neither pen nor tongue can divide the antichristians from their blind folly! And I would you would cause your friends to read over St. Augustine upon the epistle of St. John, and tell you the meaning thereof, if they think it expedient for you to know it, as I remember, it is in his *Tractate* 3. But I am not certain of that, because I have not seen it since I was at Cambridge; and here I have not St. Augustine's works to look for it, but well I know that there he teaches us to know the Christians from the antichristians, both which are christened, and both confess Jesus to be the Christ, if they are asked the question: and yet the one part denieth it in very deed. But let us not stand upon words, but attend to our actions and manner of life, whether we strive to perform our callings or not, yea, examine whether we are not perhaps persuaded that it is not needful for us to accomplish such things, but that it is enough to bear rule and authority over them, and bestow ourselves wholly upon secular matters, the pleasures and pomps of the world. And yet we desire to appear as if only of God, but they far otherwise confess Christ, who confessing him are approved of God.

And yet, as long as they minister the word of God or his sacraments, or any thing that God has ordained to the salvation of mankind, wherewith God has promised to be

present, to work with the ministration of the same to the end of the world, they are to be heard, to be obeyed, to be honoured for God's ordinance sake, which is effectual and fruitful, whatsoever the minister be, though he be a devil, and neither of the church nor a member of the same, as Origen saith and Chrysostom; and St. Jerome saith, that it is not all one to honour them and trust in them; but there is required a judgment to discern when they minister God's word and the ordinances of the same, and their own, lest peradventure we take chalk for cheese, which will edge our teeth and hinder digestion. For as it is commonly said, The blind eateth many a fly—as they did who were persuaded by the high priests to ask Barabbas and to crucify Jesus; and ye know that to follow blind guides is to come into the pit with them. And will you know, saith St. Augustine, how openly they resist Christ, when men begin to blame them for their misliving, and intolerable secularity and negligence? They dare not for shame blaspheme Christ himself, but they will blaspheme the ministers and preachers by whom they are blamed.

Therefore, whereas you pray for agreement both in the truth, and in uttering of the truth, when shall that be, as long as we will not hear the truth, but disquiet with craftiness the preachers of the truth, because they reprove our evil with the truth? And to say truth, better it were to have a deformity in preaching, so that some would preach the truth of God, and that which is to be preached, without cauponation* and adulteration of the word (as Lyranus saith in his time few did—what they do now-a-days, I leave to them that can judge,) than to have such a uniformity that the unlearned people should be thereby occasioned to continue still in their lamentable ignorance, corrupt judgment, superstition and idolatry, and esteem things as they all do preposterously. Doing that which they need not to do, leaving undone that which they ought to do, for lack or want of knowing what is to be done, and so show their love to God, not as God biddeth, who saith, "If ye love me keep my commandments," and again, "He that knoweth my precepts and doeth them, he loveth me," but as they bid, who seek their own things, not Christ's; as though to tithe mint were more than judgment, faith, and mercy.

And what is it to live in the state of curates, but what he

* Dressing up and cooking.

taught who said, "Peter, lovest thou me? Feed, feed, feed." Which is now set aside, as though to love were to do nothing else, but to wear rings, mitres, rochets, &c. And when they err in right living, how can the people but err in loving, and all of the new fashion, to his dishonour that suffered his passion, and taught the true kind of loving, which is now turned into piping, playing, and curious singing, which will not be reformed, I trow, except by the powerful hand of God. And I have both St. Augustine and St. Thomas, with divers others, to show, that *law* is taken not only for ceremonies but also for morals, where it is said, "Ye are not under the law;" though your friends reprove the same. But they can make no divison in a Christian congregation! And whereas both you and they would have a soberness in our preaching, I pray God send it unto us, whatsoever you mean by it. For I see well, whosoever will be happy, and busy with *væ vobis*,* he shall shortly after come *coram nobis*.†

And where your friends think that I made a lie, when I said that I have thought in times past that the Pope had been lord of the world, though your friends are much better learned than I, yet am I sure that they know not either what I think or have thought, better than I do, as "no one knoweth what is in the heart of man," and as though better men than I had not thought so, as Bonifacius as I remember the eighth, the great learned man John Turrecremata, and Presbyter Cardinalis in his book where he proves the pope to be above the general council, where he saith that the pope is the king of kings and lord of lords, and that he is the true lord of the whole world by good right, albeit in fact he is not so; and that Constantine did but restore his own unto him, when he gave unto him Rome, so that, as St. John saith Christ did, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not;" and yet I hear not that any of our Christian congregations reclaimed against him, until now of late dissension began. Who your friends are I cannot tell; but I wish you would desire them to be my good masters, and if they will do me no good, at the least that they do me no harm; and though they can do you more good than I, yet I am sure I would be as loath to hurt you as they can be, either with my opinions, manner of preaching, or writing.

* Woe to you (declaring the truth.)

† Before us (summoned before the prelates.)

And as for the pope's high dominion over all, there is one Raphael Marulphus in London, an Italian, and in times past a merchant of dispensations,* who I suppose would die in the quarrel, as God's true knight and martyr! As touching purgatory and worshipping of saints, I showed to you my mind before my ordinary: and yet I marvelled somewhat that after private communication had with him, you would, as it were, adjure me to open my mind before him, not giving me warning before, except that I cannot think you designed evil towards me: and yet neither mine ordinary nor you disallowed the thing that I said, and I looked not to escape better than Doctor Crome;† but when I have opened my mind ever so fully, I shall be reported to deny my preaching, by them that have belied my preaching, as he was. But it is a great work of patience to endure the calumnies of a slanderous church.

Sir, I have had more business in my little cure since I spake with you, what with sick folks, and what with matrimonies, than I have had since I came to it, or than I should have thought a man would have in a great cure. I wonder how men can go quietly to bed who have great cures and many, and yet peradventure are in none of them all! But I pray you tell none of your friends that I said so foolishly, lest I make a dissension in a christian congregation, and divide a sweet and a restful union! Sir, I had made an end of this scribbling, and was beginning to write it again more truly and more distinctly, and to correct it, but there came a man of my Lord of Farley, with a citation to appear before my lord of London in haste, to be punished for such excesses as I committed at my last being there, so that I could not perform my purpose. I doubt whether you can read it as it is. If you can, well be it; if not, I pray you send it me again, and I would that you so do, whether you can read it or not. What a world is this, that I am put to so great labour and pains, besides great costs above my power, for preaching of a poor simple sermon! But our Saviour Christ said true: "Ye must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom." So dangerous is it to desire to live holy in Christ, yea in a christian congregation. May God make us all Christians, after the right fashion. *Amen.*

* Seller of the pope's indulgences.
† He was compelled to recant.

V.

Father Latimer to One in prison for the profession of the gospel: giving his judgment, whether it be lawful to buy off the cross.

The eternal consolation of the Spirit of God comfort and establish your faithful heart in this your glorious cross of the gospel, until the day of reward in our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Blessed be God, dear brother after our common faith, that has given you hitherto a will with patience to suffer for his gospel sake. I trust that He, who hath begun this good work in you, will perform the same to the end. But I understand by your letters, that he which tempteth and envieth you this glory, ceases not to lay stumbling blocks before you, to bereave you of that crown of immortality, which is now ready to be put on your head: persuading you that you may for money be redeemed out of a glorious captivity into a servile liberty; which you by your godly wisdom and spirit perceive well enough, and that he who hath put his hand to the plough and looketh back, is not meet for the kingdom of God: and that no one, who is a good soldier to Christ, entangles himself with worldly markets. Christ saith, that "Foxes have their holes, and birds of the air have their nests, but the Son of man hath not where to hide his head." Matt. viii. The wise men of the world can find shifts to avoid the cross; and the unstable in faith can set themselves to rest with the world: but the simple servant of Christ looks for no other but oppression in the world. And then is their greatest glory, when they are under the cross of their master Christ: which he did bear, not only for our redemption, but also for an example to us, that we should follow his steps in suffering, that we might be partakers of his glorious resurrection.

I therefore approve highly your judgment in this behalf, who think it not lawful to redeem yourself out of the cross for money, unless you would go about to exchange glory for shame, and to sell your inheritance for a mess of pottage, as Esau did, who afterwards found it no more: and would think the good gifts of God to be procured with money, as Simon Magus, or else to sell Christ for

thirty-pence,* as Judas did. Good authority you may have out of the Scriptures, to confirm your judgment against all gainsayers.

The first is, what our Saviour Christ saith, "There is none worthy of him, except he daily take up his cross, and follow him." If we must daily take up our cross, how may we then, by our own procurement, shift that cross, which Christ has put upon us, and give money to be discharged of that we are called unto? If in taking up the cross we must also follow Christ, then we may not cast the same off, until we have carried it with him unto death.

St. Paul to the Philippians saith, that "it is not only given to us to believe, but also to suffer for his name." If it be the gift of God to suffer for Christ's sake; if it be the gift of God, with what conscience may a man sell the gift of God, and give money to be rid thereof? God gives this grace but to a few, as we see at this day. Therefore we ought to show ourselves both faithful and thankful for the same.

Moreover, St. Paul saith, that "every man must abide in that vocation, as he is called." But we are called to suffer, as St. Peter manifestly declares, saying, "If when you do well, and yet be evil handled, ye do abide it, this is a grace of God. For ye are called to this; because Christ was afflicted, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps."

Since then this is our calling, how may we, without the displeasure of God, go about to redeem us with money out of the same? St. Paul affirms the same to the Romans, saying, "For we are all day long delivered unto death, and accounted as sheep appointed to the slaughter." Also, he saith in the same chapter, that "we are predestinate to be like and conformable to the image of his Son;" that as they persecuted him, so shall they persecute us; and as they slew him, so shall they slay us.

And Christ saith in St. John, that "they shall excommunicate you, and kill you, and think to do God worship thereby. And this they shall do unto you: and this have I spoken unto you, that when the time cometh, you should not be offended in me."

I cannot see how we might go about to deliver ourselves from the death we are called unto, for money. St. Peter shows what we must do that are under the cross, saying,

* Thirty pieces of silver.

"Let them that suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to him as unto a faithful Creator." And, "Let him not be ashamed, that suffereth as a Christian man, but rather glorify God in this condition." St. Paul also to the Hebrews shows, that we may not faint under the cross, neither by any means fly aside, saying, "Let us lay away all that presseth down, and the sin that hangeth so fast on, and let us run with patience unto the battle that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; which for the joy set before him, abode the cross, and despised the shame, and is set down on the right hand of the throne of God. Consider therefore that he endured such speaking against him of sinners, lest we should be weary and faint in our mind. For we have not yet resisted unto blood-shedding, striving against sin: and have forgotten the consolation which speaketh unto us as unto children, "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, neither faint, when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth, him he chasteneth, yea, he scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." If we endure chastening, God offereth himself unto us, as unto sons. And blessed are they that continue unto the end.

In the Apocalypse the church of God is commanded not to fear those things which she shall suffer. For behold! the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tempted, and ye shall have ten days' affliction. Be faithful unto the death, and I will give thee the crown of life. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear what the Spirit speaketh to the congregations. He that hath overcome, shall not be hurt by the second death."

Are these undoubted Scriptures? We may be sufficiently taught, that here is no means for us to fly, that are caught under the cross, to any such worldly means as the flesh can devise. Again, we were created to set forth God's glory all the days of our life: which we, as unthankful sinners, have forgotten to do, as we ought all our days hitherto. And now God, by affliction, offers us good occasion to perform, one day of our life, our duty. And shall we go about to chop* away this good occasion, which God offers us for our honour and eternal rest? In so doing we shall declare, that we have no zeal for God's glory, neither for the truth, which is so shamefully oppressed, nor for our weak brethren and sisters, who have need of strong witnesses to con-

* Exchange.

firm them. Therefore we should now be glad with St. Paul in our afflictions for our weak brethren's sake, and "go about to supply that which wanteth of the afflictions of Christ in our flesh, in his body, which is the church." (Col. i.) Not that the afflictions of Christ were not sufficient for our salvation; but that we who are professors of Christ must be contented to be afflicted, and to drink of the cup of his passion, which he hath drunk: and so shall we be assured to sit at his right hand, or at his left, in the kingdom of his Father.

Christ saith in John vi., "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye shall have no life in you." Which, in the interpretation of most ancient and godly doctors, is, to be partakers both in faith and deed, of the passion of Christ; which, if we refuse, what do we, but, as the Capernaites did, go from everlasting life? And here we are with Christ, who hath the words of eternal life. Whither shall we go, or what may we give to be separated from him?

But perchance the worldly wise man, or carnal gospeller, will confess this to be true, and object that he intends not to deny the truth, although he buy himself out of the yoke of the cross; minding hereafter, if he be driven thereto, to die therein. But to him I answer, with Solomon, "Defer not to do well till to-morrow, but do it out of hand, if thou have liberty." So I say, that we little know whether God at another time will give us such grace as he now offers us, to suffer for his sake: and it is not for us to choose it when we will. Therefore let us offer the counsel of St. Paul, (Eph. v.,) "Serve the time" of affliction, which we are in, and be glad to be afflicted with the people of God, which is the recognizance* of the children of God; and rather "to redeem the time" with our death for the testimony of the truth, to which we are born, than to purchase a miserable life for the concupiscence of the world, and to the great danger of falling from God. For as long as we are in the body, we are strangers to God, and far from our native country, which is in heaven, where our everlasting day is. We are now more near to God than ever we were, yea, we are at the gates of heaven; and we are become a joyful spectacle, in this our captivity, to God, to the angels, and to all his saints, who look that we should end our course with glory. We have found the precious stone of the gos-

* Badge or distinctive mark.

pel; for which we ought to sell all that we have in the world. (Mat. xiii.) And shall we exchange, or lay to gage,* the precious treasure which we have in our hands, that we may lament in the world a few days, contrary to our vocation? God forbid it. But let us, as Christ willeth us in St. Luke, "look up, and lift up our heads, for our redemption is at hand."

A man that hath long travelled, and hath his journey's end before him, what madness were it for him to take farther compass about, and put himself in more trouble and labour than he need! If we live by hope, let us desire the end and fruition of our hope. (2 Tim. ii.) "No man is crowned, but he that lawfully striveth: none obtaineth the goal, but he that runneth out," (1 Cor. ix.) Run therefore, so as ye may be sure to obtain. You have run hitherto right well, good Christian brethren. God be praised therefore. But now what hindereth you but a persuasion, that is "not sprung of him that calleth you," as it is written. (Gal. v.)

Example hereof we have, first in our Saviour Jesus Christ; who being advised by Peter to provide better for himself, than to go to Jerusalem to be crucified, addressed the reproach, "Go behind me, Satan, thou knowest not the things of God. Shall I not drink of the cup which my Father giveth me?" If Christ would not, at his friend's counsel, provide to shun the cross, no more ought we who are his disciples, being called thereto, at our friend's flattering motions. "For the disciple is not greater than his Master. For if they have persecuted me," saith he, "they will persecute you." (John xv.) St. Paul, being in prison for the gospel, was oftentimes brought before Felix the judge, who looked for some money for his deliverance: but I cannot read that Paul went about at all to offer him any. John and Peter being imprisoned for the testimony of the word, did with all boldness confess the same; and sought no other means of redemption, than by faithful confession. Paul and Silas being of God miraculously delivered from their chains and bands of death, having all the doors of their prison open, to depart if they would; yet departed they not out of prison, but abode still the good pleasure of God, and his lawful deliverance. God in times past was angry with his people of Israel for sending into Egypt for help in their necessity; saying, by

* Pawn.

the prophet Isaiah, "Woe be unto you, runagate children, who go about to take advice, and not of me, and begin a work, and not of my Spirit." (Is. iii.) "Cursed is he," by the prophet Jeremiah, "that maketh flesh to be his strength." Moses chose rather to be afflicted with the people of God, than to be counted the son of king Pharaoh's daughter. The martyrs in the old time were racked, as St. Paul testifies, and would not be delivered, that they might have a better resurrection.

Let us follow them, and leave the pope's market, who buys and sells the bodies and souls of men to Balaam and his false prophets; who love the reward of iniquity.

If any man perceive his faith not able to abide the fire, let such a one with weeping buy his liberty, until he hath obtained more strength; lest the gospel by him sustain an offence of some shameful recantation. Let the dead bury the dead. Let us that be of the lively faith follow the Lamb, wheresoever he goeth, and say to them that are thus curious and wise, and dispute us in this matter, with St. Paul, "Stretch forth the hands that were let down, and the weak knees, and see that you have straight steps to your feet, lest any halting turn you out of the way; yea, rather, let it be healed."

Embrace Christ's cross, and Christ shall embrace you. The peace of God be with you for ever, and with all them that live in captivity with you in Christ. Amen.

Written by M. Latimer, being in captivity.

VI.

A Letter sent to Mistress Wilkinson, of London, widow, from Master Hugh Latimer, out of Bocardo, in Oxford.*

If the gift of a pot of cold water shall not be in oblivion† with God, how can God forget your manifold and bountiful gifts, when he shall say to you: "I was in prison and you visited me." May God grant us all to do and suffer while we are here, as may be to his will and pleasure. Amen.

Yours in Bocardo,

Hugh Latimer.

* The prison. † Forgotten.

The Protestation of M. Hugh Latimer, rendered in writing to Doctor Weston, and others of the queen's commissioners with him, concerning certain questions to him propounded, in an assembly at Oxford, holden the twentieth of April, A. D. 1554; *faithfully translated out of Latin into English.*

The conclusions whereunto I must answer are these:—

The first, that in the sacrament of the altar, by the virtue of God's word pronounced by the priest, there is really and naturally the very body of Christ present, as it was conceived of the Virgin Mary, under the appearances of bread and wine. And in like manner his blood in the cup.

2. The second is, That after the consecration, there remaineth no substance of bread and wine, and no other substance but the substance of God and man.

3. The third is, That in the mass there is the lively sacrifice of the church, which is propitiatory, as well for the sins of the quick as the dead.

Concerning the first conclusion, methinketh it is set forth with certain new terms lately found, that are obscure, and do not sound according to the Scripture. Nevertheless, however I understand it, thus do I answer, although not without peril of my life. I say, that to a right celebration there is no other presence of Christ required, than a spiritual presence: and this is sufficient for a Christian man; as a presence by which we both abide in Christ, and Christ in us, to the obtaining of eternal life, if we persevere in his true gospel. And this same presence may be called a *real* presence, because to the faithful believer there is the real or spiritual body of Christ. Which I here rehearse, lest some sycophant or scorner should suppose me to make nothing else of the sacrament, but a bare and naked sign. As for that which is feigned of many, concerning the corporeal presence, I for my part take it but for a papistical invention. And therefore I think it utterly to be rejected from among God's children, that seek their Saviour in faith, and to be taught among the fleshly papists, that will be again under the yoke of antichrist.

2. Concerning the second conclusion, I dare be bold to say, that it has no stay nor ground of God's holy word, but is a thing invented and found out by man, and therefore to be reputed and had as false, and I had almost said,

as the mother and nurse of all other errors. It were good for my masters and lords, the transubstantiators, to take better heed to their doctrine, lest they conspire with the Nestorians. For the Nestorians deny that Christ had a true natural body. And I cannot see how the papists can avoid it: for they would contain the natural body which Christ had (sin excepted) against all truth, into a wafer cake!

3. The third conclusion, as I understand it, seemeth subtlely to sow sedition against the offering which Christ himself offered for us, in his own person, and for all, and never again to be done; according to the Scriptures written in God's book. In which book read the pithy place of St. Paul to the Hebrews, the ninth and tenth, where he saith, that Christ his ownself hath made a perfect sacrifice for our sins and never again to be done; and then ascended into heaven, and there sitteth a merciful intercessor between God's justice and our sins; and there shall tarry till these lying transubstantiators, and all other his foes be made his footstool; and this offering did he offer freely of himself, as it is written in the tenth of John, and needed not that any man should do it for him. I will speak nothing of the wonderful presumption of man, that dare attempt this thing, without any manifest calling; specially that which intrudeth to the overthrowing and fruitless-making (if not wholly, yet partly) of the cross of Christ. And therefore worthily a man may say to my lords and masters, officers, "By what authority do you do this? And who gave you this authority?" When and where? A man cannot, saith St. John the Baptist, take any thing, except it be given him from above; much less then may any man presume to usurp any honour before he is called thereunto.

Again; "If any man sin," saith St. John, (1 John ii.) "we have," (not a masser, nor an offerer upon earth, which can sacrifice for us at mass: but) "an advocate with God the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one;" which once offered himself for us long ago. (1 John ii., Heb. vii.) Of which offering, the efficacy and effect remaineth for ever. So that it is needless to have such offerers; but if they had a nail driven through one of their ears, every time they offer, as Christ had four driven through his hands and feet, they would soon leave offering. Yet, if their offering did not bring gains withal, it would not be so often done. What meaneth St. Paul, when he saith, "They

that preach the gospel, shall live of the gospel?" (1 Cor. ix.) Whereas according to them he should rather have said, "The Lord hath ordained, that they that sacrifice at mass should live of the sacrificing." But although the Holy Ghost appointed them no living for their mass-saying in God's book, yet have they appointed themselves a living in anti-christ's decrees. For I am sure, if God would have had a new kind of sacrificing priest at mass, then he, or some of his apostles, would have made some mention thereof in their master Christ's will.* But belike the secretaries were not the massers' friends, or else they saw it was a charge without profit; it must needs else have been remembered and provided for, as there was a living provided for the sacrificing priests before Christ's coming, in the Jews' times. For now they have nothing to allege for themselves, that is to say, for their sacrificing, nor for their living, as those that preach the gospel have. For Christ himself, after he had suffered, and made a perfect sacrifice for our sins, and also when he rose again to justify us, commanded his disciples to go and preach all the world over, saying, "Whosoever believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved." (Mat. xxviii.) But he spake never a word of sacrificing, or saying of mass; nor promised the hearers any reward, but for the idolaters, with the devil and his angels, except they speedily repented with tears.

Therefore, sacrificing priests should now cease for ever: for now all men ought to offer their own bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable before God. (Rom. xii.) The supper of the Lord was instituted to excite us to thanksgiving, and to stir us up by preaching of the gospel, to remember his death till he comes again, according to his commandment. For Christ bade Peter feed the flock, and not sacrifice for the flock. I can never wonder enough that Peter, and all the apostles, should forget thus negligently the office of sacrificing, if they had thought it necessary, seeing that in these days it is had in such price and estimation. To feed the flock is almost nothing with many; for if you cease feeding,† still you shall be taken for a good Catholic; but if you

* The New Testament.
† Preaching or instructing.

cease from sacrificing and massing, you will be taken, I trow, for a heretic, and soon come to such a place as I and many of my brethren are in.

Thus, lo! I have written an answer to your conclusions, even as I will answer before the majesty of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by whose only sacrifice I hope to possess heaven. Therefore I beseech your good masterships to take it in good part, as I have done it with great pains, having no man to help me, as I never was before denied to have. O sirs, you may chance to come to this age and weakness that I am in, and then you would be loth to be used as I am at your hands; that no man may come to me, to help me for any need, no, not so much as to mend my hose or my coat. And you know that he that has but one pair of hosen, had need sometimes to have them mended.

I have spoken in my time before two kings, more than one, two, or three hours to either, without interruption; but now, when I should have spoken the truth out of God's book, (for that I ever took for my warrant,) I could not (by your leave) be suffered to declare my faith before you, (for the which, God willing, I intend to give my life) not by the space of a quarter of an hour, without snatches, rejaggs, revilings, checks, rebukes, and taunts, such as I never heard the like in such an audience, all my life long. Surely, I have made some heinous offence; forsooth, I think it is this: I have spoken against the mass, and asked, if their god of the altar had any marrow-bones. For I said I had read the Testament over seven times since I was in the prison, with great deliberation, and yet I could never find, as I said before, in the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ, (which the papists call the sacrament of the altar,) either flesh, blood, or bones, nor the word transubstantiation. And because, peradventure, my masters (that can so soon make Christ's body of bread, which was not made but conceived by the Holy Ghost in the Virgin's womb, as God's invaluable word doth testify, and also all the ancient fathers) might say, that I doted for age, and my wits were gone, so that my words were not to be credited. Yet, behold! the providence of God, which will have his truth known (yea if all men held their tongues, the stones should speak) brought this to pass, that where these famous men, namely, M. Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury, M. Ridley, bishop of London, that holy man M. Bradford, and I, old

Hugh Latimer, were imprisoned in the Tower of London for Christ's gospel preaching, and because we would not go a massing, every one in close prison from other, the same tower became so full of other prisoners, that we four were thrust into one chamber, as men not to be accounted of. But, God be thanked, to our great joy and comfort, there did we together read over the New Testament, with great deliberation and painful study. And I assure you, as I will answer before the tribunal throne of God's Majesty, we could find in the Testament of Christ's body and blood, no other presence but a spiritual presence, nor that the mass was any sacrifice for sins; but in that heavenly book it appeared, that the sacrifice which Christ Jesus our Redeemer made upon the cross, was perfect, holy, and good; that God the heavenly Father required no other, nor that ever again to be done, but was pacified with that only all-sufficient and most painful sacrifice of that sweet slain Lamb, Christ our Lord, for our sins.

Wherefore stand from the altar, you sacrileging* (I should have said you sacrificing) priests; for you have no authority in God's book to offer up our Redeemer, neither will he any more come into the hands of sacrificing priests, for the good cheer you made him when he was among your sworn generation. And I say, you lay people, as you are called, come away from forged sacrifices, which the papists do feign only, to be lords over you, and to get money; lest your bodies, which are or should be Christ's temples, be false witness-bearers against the blood of our redemption. For the Holy Ghost promised to St. John in the eighteenth chapter of the Revelation, that if you come from them, you get none of their plagues; but if you tarry with them, you have spun a fair thread; for you shall drink of the same cup of God's wrath that they shall. And there by your playing at main chance, you bring all the righteous blood that wicked Cain hath shed, even upon your own heads. Choose you now, whether you will ride to the devil with idolaters, or go to heaven with Christ and his members, by bearing the cross.

Now I am sure this speech hath offended my lords and masters; and I marvel at it, for I ask no other question, than requiring to know, if their bread-god had flesh, marrow, and bones, or not, as our dear Redeemer had, and as they,

* Sacrilegious.

good doctors, I warrant you, affirm and set forth with fire and fagot, that their white idol, I should have said their altar god, hath. Therefore, methinks, they are angry with me without a cause. But one thing this trouble hath brought me unto, that is, to be acquainted with Dr. Weston, whom I never saw before. And I had not thought he had been so great a clerk.* For in all King Edward's time he was a curate near Bishopsgate, and held him well content to feed his parishioners with the doctrine that he now calls *heresy*, and is sent from the Queen to judge us for the same. But I pray God send him a more merciful judgment at the hand of Christ, than we receive of him. And I would ever have him, and all those that be in rooms,† to remember, that he who dwelleth on high looketh on the things upon earth; and also that there is no counsel against the Lord, as St. Paul saith, (1 Cor. i.;) and that the world has and ever hath been a tottering world; and yet, again, that though we must obey the princes, yet are we limited how far; that is, so long as they do not command things against the manifest truth. But now they do; therefore we must say with Peter and John, "We must obey God before man." (Acts v.) I mean no other resistance, but to offer our lives to the death, rather than commit any evil against the majesty of God, and his most holy and true word. But this I say unto you, if the Queen has any pernicious enemies within her realm, they are those that cause her to maintain idolatry, and to wet her sword of justice in the blood of her people, that are set to defend the gospel; for this hath been always the destruction both of kings, queens, and whole commonwealths; as I am afraid it will make this commonwealth of England to quake shortly, if speedy repentance be not had among the inhabitants thereof. But you cannot say that you have not had warning, and therefore take heed betimes, and be warned by other countries, that have forsaken God's known truth, and followed the lies of men. If not, other lands shall be warned by you.

You that are here sent to judge our faith, be not learned indeed, I mean, not aright; because you know not Christ and his pure word. For it is nothing but plain ignorance to know many things without Christ and his gospel. St. Paul saith, that he knew nothing but Jesus Christ crucified. (1 Cor. ii.) Many men babble much about Christ, who yet know not Christ, but pretending to follow Christ, craf-

* Scholar. † Places, authority.

tily cover and darken his glory. And indeed these are the fittest men to dishonour a man, that seem to be his friends. Depart from such men, saith the apostle to Timothy. It is not out of the way to remember what St. Augustine saith against the epistle of Petilianus.* "Whosoever," saith he, "teaches any thing as necessary to be believed, which is not contained in the Old and New Testament, the same is accursed." O beware of that curse, you that so stoutly set forth men's doctrines, yea, wicked blasphemy against the truth. I am much deceived, if Basilius have not the like words; "Whatsoever," saith he, "is besides the Holy Scripture, if the same is taught as necessary to be believed, the same is sin." Oh! therefore take good heed of this sin. There are some that speak false things, more profitable to the purse, and more like the truth than the truth itself. Therefore St. Paul giveth a watch-word, "Let no man deceive you," saith he, "with probability and persuasions of words." What a damnable act have you done! You have changed the most holy communion into a wicked and horrible sacrifice of idolatry; and you deny to the lay people the cup, which is directly against God's institution, which saith, Drink ye all of this. And where you should preach the benefit of Christ's death to the people, you speak to the wall in a foreign tongue. God open the door of your heart, that you may for once have more care to enlarge the kingdom of God than your own, if it be his will.

Thus have I answered your conclusions, as I will stand unto with God's help to the fire. And after this I am able to declare to the majesty of God, by his invaluable word, that I die for the truth; for I assure you, if I could grant† to the Queen's proceedings, and endure by the word of God, I would rather live than die; but seeing they are directly against God's word, I will obey God more than man, and so embrace the stake.

By H. L.

* Lib. iii. cap. 6, contra Cras. Petilian.
† Submit.

THE END.

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